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By

John Timothy Stone, D.D.

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RECRUITING FOR CHRIST

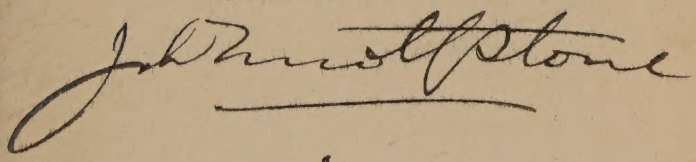
HAND TO HAND METHODS WITH MEN

By

JOHN TIMOTHY STONE

Author of

"Footsteps in a Parish"



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Dedicated
to
THE MEN IN THE CHURCH
OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

THIS volume grew out of a course of addresses given in response to the united invitation of the Brotherhoods and the Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago. It is a practical and inspirational study of the importance and methods of personal work, adapted to modern life. The course was given during the winter of 1910 to several hundred active laymen representing largely the evangelical churches.

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I
MOTIVE

"Never fear to bring the sublimest motive to the smallest duty, and the most infinite comfort to the smallest trouble."—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

"Direct, control, suggest, this day
All I design, or do, or say;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite."

—THOMAS KEN.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence;
For out of it are the issues of life."

—*Job 4: 23.*

"Search me, Oh God, and know my heart."

Psalm 139: 23.

"They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."—*Daniel 12: 3.*

"I need a friend who knows me
So justly through and through
He'll ne'er misjudge a motive,
Nor let me strain to do
More work than I can manage,
The work that is not mine,
Because of vain ambition,
Or conscience drawn too fine."

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RECRUITING FOR CHRIST

I

MOTIVE

AS we enter upon a practical study of winning men to Christ, do we believe that "He that is wise winneth souls"? Do we also believe that: "He who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death"?

The Spirit of God

Winning men to the Lord Jesus Christ is the work of the Divine Spirit. He must really do the work in us and through us. The heart, the hand, the life, the brain, may work zealously, but if the inward life is not prompted by God's Holy Spirit, our work will not avail. Man cannot be used simply through his abilities. His very gifts may retard his influence. Genius without spirituality becomes a mere exhibition. The man is known for his ability rather than for his message. His words have not the force of his conviction.

Two men spent a Sunday in New York City years ago. They desired to hear two great preachers. Both heard one of rare power in the morning. One said: "I am going to hear the other man to-night." His friend replied: "I am going back to hear this same man; I never heard such genius nor listened to such remarkable utterance. I mean to go again to-night." They met on Monday. "Did you hear our friend again?" "Yes," was the reply. "The evening sermon was more marvelous than the morning; I never heard such a man or such sermons. What did you think of your man?" His companion quietly replied: "I do not know just what I thought of the sermon, or the man, but I went back to my room in the hotel and got down on my knees and asked God to forgive me and make me a better man." The first preacher outclassed the second in his gifts and ability! But he was an exhibition; the second a Divine power.

What a man may do for God is not so important, but what God may do with a man. When Gideon accomplished his great work with his small band of followers, it was not Gideon who accomplished it; it was God! "The Lord clothed Himself with Gideon." The world saw Gideon, but "God was Gideon-

clothed"! God is the great dynamic. A man may see us outwardly, but only as God's Spirit is within us are we able to win victories. Primarily we must gain this truth in introducing our subject.

A long cable stretches before us, perfectly constructed, the central copper wire in its place, surrounded, perhaps, by gutta percha, properly encased and insulated, but this long cable lies before us dead and useless. At one end there is a great dynamo, at the other end a city, but the cable between lies lifeless by itself. What is needed? Simply this: Connect the cable with the dynamo. Then connect it with the city. Light, heat, power are the result; the city is illuminated; the city is warmed; the wheels of machinery turn. That light means knowledge; that heat means sympathy; that power means activity. The cable is necessary, —it is the agent of transmission,—it is the human soul. God is that dynamo. The city is the place of service. Man must be trained for service, but this training cannot in itself avail. He must receive the Divine indwelling. How? By connecting his soul with the Divine if he is permanently to bless the human. Then man, gifted, talented, trained, is used by God with all his willingness, manliness, courage, and

adaptability, to do the work of God. Without this connection he is simply the lifeless cable, brilliant, separate, powerless.

The first essential in our thought is that of Motive. *Why* do we seek to win men? The learned and devout scholar Bengel placed over the entrance to his oratory: "*What* seek ye?" He wanted men to face the *object* of their work. Method, means, and manner are all secondary to motive, for we are not a class with a subject, but men with a definite object—a motive which will inspire and actuate purpose and work. Specific motive means universal light. "When thine eye is single, the whole body is full of light." We need a concentration of aim which may unify our motive and centre it in God. This will give us holiness in motive, and our work will be God's own work. We will become "Co-labourers with Him."

Motive

Men have seldom been used mightily for God unless they have been directly aiming at the conversion of souls. Such is the Divine motive. When Jesus Christ first called men, that was His motive in calling them. "Follow Me," He said, "and I will make you fishers of men." Mark made it more specific in his Gospel: "Follow Me and I will make you *to be-*

come fishers of men." That word "become" implies instruction and development. Motive will gain power by its own motion and equipment. Dr. Torrey says: "With a holy motive, we must be thoroughly converted, must have a love for souls, must have a working knowledge of the Bible, must pray much, and be baptised by the Holy Spirit." To this may be added two other requisites: common sense and common sympathy.

Even with the right motive we will face various dangers. There is danger in the very thing which we seek—numbers! Constantly the enthusiasm of numbers detracts from definite interest in individuals. Jesus Christ has won His millions. He began His work, however, by selecting individuals. Motive, backed by individual loyalty and consecrated sincerity, is far greater in influence than numerical or material strength. Among those disciples there was rugged manliness and consecrated loyalty. And from among fishermen and tax-gatherers the Saviour chose His men of motive, disregarding the human standards of numerical strength and social prestige.

Dangers

A very subtle danger may be found within our very selves. Unconsciously selfish and am-

bitious, we may desire personal praise, notoriety, general recognition. This danger may lead to a pious egotism, an unconscious aim *to be known* as good men, as personal workers, as gifted in winning others. We should pray for personal holiness in motive. "Search me, Oh God, and know my heart." With Paul we must say: "Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified unto me and I unto the world."

Necessity

The fact that so large a number of people are unreached by the Gospel makes this work most necessary. Churches have multiplied, organisation has been perfected, and still very many, especially in our great cities, are entirely outside the Church and apparently beyond the reach of the Church. Instead of a discouraging fact, this should encourage us, as the very necessity of this work is thus emphasised.

Preaching is a Divinely appointed means; writing has its place, but the personal word must be used as never before if this work is to be accomplished. It is absolutely necessary. There is no substitute for this personal, direct, and individual approach. The objections to the method are largely overstated and usually

unfair, based frequently upon an argument defending the conventional. Every general and personal excuse has and will be given to discredit this form of activity. Men without experience naturally dread it, and shrink from its responsibility. The excuse is not well taken, because it does not hold in other things. All questions of the day are discussed directly, individually, personally, and practically. Sympathy, coöperation, investment are sought and gained through personal approach and interview. The very fact that this excuse exists in itself reiterates the necessity of this very form of work.

There are immense numbers of men and women who cannot be reached in any other way. They have never formed the habit of church attendance. Many look upon the Church as a close corporation. Many consider it composed of members who do not desire outsiders or sinners. The Church as such cannot reach these people. Only as the individual is approached personally, and, through sincere effort, gradually won, can confidence be established and attendance at the House of God gained. Our very difficulty is the problem itself, and emphasises its dire necessity.

We have alluded to the personal method as the one preferred by Christ.

Although He talked with the multitudes and preached Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins, still He gave Himself largely to dealing with individuals. He appealed to men as men. He frequently disregarded the multitude and left them to talk with individuals.

Importance of the work

The throng about Him was disregarded when He spoke to an onlooker who had climbed into a tree.

He stopped by a well-side to converse with a fallen woman.

He made the hearts of men "burn within them" as He talked with them in the roadway, giving His best self to personal interview.

He selected His apostles one by one, or two by two,—Matthew, Philip, Nathaniel, James and John, Peter and Andrew. He addressed Saul of Tarsus as an individual on that Damascus Road. He disregarded the great work in Samaria and called Philip by name. He sent him into the Desert, simply emphasising by his errand the great importance of this work, for in that Desert he was called upon to talk with an individual, and that Ethiopian eunuch a stranger.

It is the only effective way to reach the *entire* community. To reach all kinds and all classes of people by all kinds and all classes of men. Nothing is more potential in winning men to a change of heart and life than personal testimony; like wins like. National distinctions and misunderstandings are unknown when "Greek meets Greek." Jerry McAuley knew how to approach a river thief, and the man approached understood his language from the first word.

Effectiveness of the method

The college student who has thrown away his chances and lost his ambition, immediately finds a new hope when he hears the personal story of Mercer. But the method is not confined to "like meeting like." Through this method the natural adaptabilities of men have fair play. The man whom one finds unapproachable is approached easily by another. The effectiveness of this method is not only seen in business, but has actually become the essential principle of business activity. It is *the modern method* in business, as well as in political life.

A large share of the work at one time accomplished within a warehouse or storeroom is now accomplished hundreds or thousands of miles away from the business centre. The

work is largely done through the personal interview of buyer and seller. The salesman with samples, blue-prints, or catalogues takes the place of long journeys and hours of selection.

In many cases even these are lacking, and the simple personal testimony of trusted agents and representatives is enough. Insurance, bonds, investments of all kinds, are to-day related to this form of transaction. In many cases a signature is substituted for a face or personality. A man's name wins confidence, gains prestige, sells goods.

Political life is filled with these methods. Organizations, corporations, as well as platforms, State and National interests, all have their representatives, and do not hesitate to press their claims personally, whether in office, lobby, or on the street.

This is not confined simply to selfish ends and aims. Moral reforms, from temperance issues to questions of public education, opinions, votes, signatures, are personally solicited. This very principle has entered law and medicine. Many of our young attorneys in city life are detailed by larger firms to special and individual interviews in the creation of public sentiment. We have specialists at law who are sought for

individual opinion. A well-stocked law library of half-calf is not to-day sufficient, but the clear-cut, alert, personal opinion of the living local man has weight in convincing and winning other opinions.

The physician is not so much the general practitioner, especially where great masses of men accumulate and centre; and, in cases of extreme illness, even the rural district must have the consultation of the individual who, as a specialist, is an authority.

When we come into the realm of active business life, not simply the work of the salesman, but in the organisation of the modern office, it is far-reaching, so far as the individual touch is concerned. There is scarcely a great bond or advertising house without the required machinery to address its mailing lists. The card index has become a great business in itself; every card represents an individual, tabulated so that a complete record is known, not only of present conditions, but of past transactions.

The effectiveness of modern individual methods is thus recognised in all lines of activity. Why not within the Church of God?

The broad view of this whole matter will not narrow itself to membership solicitation for individual churches or denominations. Men

will be active in winning men to Christ for what Christ may do with them. The *where* of their service will not be a matter of importance compared with the *what* of their influence for Him; we will be as interested in their uniting with other churches as with our own.

Already, the effectiveness of this personal method has received large emphasis in the foreign field. Korea is teaching us a great lesson in her sensible demand made upon converts *to win others to Christ* before being received into active membership. If this became a condition of membership throughout the Christian Church, how quickly our cities and the entire country, to say nothing of the world, would be evangelised!

Foreign field

If each Christian became a centre from which radii went out to win other souls, with what infinite rapidity and scope the work would develop. Every single individual would become a centre from which other individuals would be reached.

What would this mean? Suppose in a church of 100 members, each member should win one soul to Christ per week; this would mean 5,200 people won in a year. Suppose one-tenth of the membership in that church of 100 should win one soul to Christ a month,

this would mean 120 won by that church, or the membership more than doubled that year.

Even then 90 per cent. of the church might be doing practically nothing in soul-winning. Again, suppose in that church of 100 members 6 Communion services were held per year; suppose 25 per cent. of the membership won a new member for each Communion service, this would mean 150 new members added in the year, although three-fourths of the church members were doing nothing. Take the work of the large church, any average good-sized church, and see the results you would have. In a church of 1,000 members, suppose each member reached one new member per month, 12,000 would be added in a year. Some one says "ridiculous!" Well, then, let us take one-tenth of the membership, leaving the 900 doing nothing, and let 100 members of that church of 1,000 win one member per month, then 1,200 would be added per year, or this church would have more than doubled her membership. Suppose one-twentieth of the membership reached one member at each Communion service, i.e., once in two months, 300 new members would be added in a year; in other words, if 95 per cent. of the members of a church of 1,000 did nothing in

soul-winning and 5 per cent., or 50 of her membership, reached one soul once in two months, 300 new members would be added to that church annually. Suppose 10 men in that church reached one man a month, 120 would be added in a year.

Over against these suggested figures place the actual facts. We have, upon the authority of the December, 1909, number of the *Missionary Review of the World,* the fact that throughout the Evangelical Churches of the United States an average of two new members united upon confession of faith last year for each minister, while in the foreign field forty-six new members were added for each missionary.

The opportunity

The Church seems to be ready for this work. Within a few years many religious writers have emphasised its importance, and various text-books and popular treatises have been published. In presenting the subject practically and comprehensively, the forerunner of these recent publications was that masterpiece of simplicity and personal illustration, edited by Henry Clay Trumbull: "Individual Work for Individuals." This man incarnated his theme and, perhaps, more than any other Apostle of recent days,

first called to the attention of a thinking Church her immediate opportunity in this important branch of service.

The important books which have followed have been adapted to certain classes and conditions of men. And through these influences and large emphasis given by press and Christian organisations, the subject no longer needs endorsement and references. Men expect new and modern methods. Everything is discussed freely to-day. Every fireside has become a rostrum, every schoolroom a debating club. Even conversation has received new impetus through argument and questioning. It is the day of the interrogation point! Practical conclusions are accepted as the result of personal and general conversation. Discussions which once would have been considered impertinent have become commonplace.

Men are far more approachable than formerly. Religious questions have become so closely related to ethical theories and moral issues that the line of demarcation between the secular and religious, as such, has been erased. Public opinion does not regard the ceremonial garments as the sign for religious recognition, although none the less loyal to the insignia of holy office, together with

Approach

due regard for form and ceremony. There is a very genuine antipathy to pretence and exterior in the realism of to-day.

It is also a layman's day. We may disregard it, oppose it, criticise it, but it is none the less a fact. Many of our ablest laymen are to-day forced into positions of opportunity and leadership in great Christian movements which they reluctantly accept. Modest and retiring themselves, they are compelled by public opinion to consider questions of religious bearing. The great Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Lay Evangelical Effort, the far-reaching influence of our denominational and interdenominational Brotherhoods, the Forward Movements of our Church, both missionary and philanthropic; all these are offering new opportunities for individual appeal, until the entire Christian world seems alive and awake to the definite personal effort of man-to-man Christianity.

Laymen

God's definition of sin differs from man's definition. Man says sin is "the breaking of the law;" God says sin is "failure to do the law." Simplified, man says sin is "doing wrong;" God says sin is "failing to do right." *"He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*

God's definition of sin

Christ's teaching constantly reiterates this thought. The parables of the Talents and the Pounds! The Sermon on the Mount, throughout its entire deep meaning, summing up the truth in that wonderful expression: "Not every one that saith unto Me: Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father." The saying of "Lord, Lord" and failing to do God's will condemns. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it not unto Me."

In concluding, let us draw attention to a few practical examples of our theme.

Few men have been used more mightily than Henry Clay Trumbull. How was he led to Christ? He was a business man in Hartford when he received an earnest letter from a loving friend. "The power of one man over another so impressed him," writes Robert E. Speer, that "he at once began personal Christian effort for others, which he continued through life." He has won his tens of thousands. He has been to countless young men their greatest religious teacher.

Henry Clay Trumbull

Personally I remember that night in the late '80's, when he spoke to us at the Student Conference at Northfield. As he came forward

on the platform in Old Stone Hall, Mr. Moody said to him: "Don't give us a lecture to-night, nor anything you have prepared, simply talk to us out of your life, tell us personal experiences you have had in winning men to Christ." None of us who heard him that night will ever forget that message of power from a humble heart, warmed with the love of God and trained in personal service. Some of us date back our genuine interest in personal work to the inspiration of that evening.

When Mr. Kimberly of Boston hesitated before that shoe store and, finally following his impulse, went in and talked with Mr. Moody, the shoe clerk, he was used of God to win his hundreds of thousands through the influence of his convert. A single instance: Last summer, at the Student Conference at Northfield, Charles Studd told us of Mr. Moody's bringing his father to Christ. He then told of his brother, who came in '85 or '86 to America by Mr. Moody's invitation. How his brother talked with Mr. Mott at Cornell. Of the telegram which his brother sent to Mr. McBurney, secretary of the New York Y. M. C. A., as to "the student Mott," prophesying his future influence in the student world.

Dwight L. Moody

A few days later we learned, through Dr. Grenfell, the influence Mr. Moody had over him when he first heard him. The world knows how that young physician of London transferred his post from Great Britain to Labrador, and we all know the hold he has now, not only upon that ice-bound people, but upon the hearts of Great Britain and America; yes, the world.

Even as we discuss this subject we realise the present influence of personal Christian service in the colleges of this country, and even as we speak and write, the echoes of the work at Cornell, Yale, and the State universities of the West, are coming to our ears.

From his own lips we heard Gipsy Smith tell of the old Methodist class leader, that won him by a personal word. When another muttered that he was "only a gipsy boy," the old man's hand was upon his shoulder, and a kindly word won his heart as he knelt at the altar. We heard him tell how General Booth singled him out and called him individually into public service.

Gipsy Smith

All of us can give from our own experience illustrations of personal work.

My first pastorate was in Utica, N. Y. Around the corner from our little church was

a small saloon kept by a German named "Bennett." I found that some of the older boys of the Sunday school and church were frequenting his little beer room. Strange tales came of what they were doing. It did not seem wise to ferret it out, but to go to the man himself. In calling one afternoon I went in and asked him to come to church. He jovially and laughingly replied that "he did not take any stock in church, and, of course, he would not come," but thanked me for my invitation and tried to be courteous by offering me a drink. I told him "I did not drink, but that I was coming back to invite him again." After frequent personal invitations, he came one Sunday night, and then again, and then the third time, and, after hearing that third gospel sermon, he arose slowly in an after-meeting (for the old man was painfully rheumatic) and humbly and earnestly confessed Christ; and in his broken tongue he told how he would destroy his liquors rather than sell them, and he knew God would give him some means of livelihood aside from the business in which he was engaged. Week after week he came into the church a penitent and devout worshipper; he was always in his place with his family. Week after week I marked

Personal illustration

special chapters in his old German Bible, which he read and reread.

A few years ago I learned that the old man was dead. He had been burned to death! He had fallen on his stove, and was too crippled to save himself. But in his last hours there were words of happy testimony of his love to his Lord and Master.

Some years ago, in another city, one who had listened to the gospel and had been a regular attendant in a particular church for over twenty-five years, was approached personally, and the direct question of his relationship to Christ presented. An appointment was made late in the evening, which was kept. It was a case of talking with a man past sixty years of age and presenting to him personally the claims of the gospel. Nominally, he was recognised as a Christian, for he was a regular attendant at the House of God, but in reality he had not given his heart to Christ. After earnest words of invitation and appeal he yielded, stating "he would rather face the Northern bullets (for he had been a soldier in the Confederate Army) than to stand before the Church of Christ and make public confession;" but he stood there, and was baptised. How well I can see his intense, impressive face,

and note again the trembling of his limbs! But that public testimony led many a man to see his own opportunity and obligation, as was evidenced in years to come. More than one who joined that church afterward dated his interest to that man's confession.

I close with an incident from boyhood. It was my first experience. We were trading postage stamps together in the little hall bedroom which I occupied in my father's home. In the Albany Y. M. C. A. rooms, at 20 North Pearl Street, a few of us boys had listened to older ones talk of the blessing of personal work, and had resolved we would try to win some of our boy friends to Christ. How well I remember that night. My sisters and some of their friends were having a good time downstairs, and once or twice called for us to come down. We kept on trading stamps, until, at last, I plucked up enough courage to say to my friend: "Jim, why don't you become a Christian?" If I had hurled the stamp album out of the window, he would not have been more surprised. I know my voice trembled and that what I said did not amount to anything. The verses which I quoted were not quoted exactly right in my embarrassment, but he saw my heart, and God honoured the effort,

and there in that little room, two of us boys in knee trousers asked the Lord Jesus Christ to help us live aright, and he gave his heart to Christ.

Later he became a honoured worker in one of the Baptist churches, and now, in a distant city, he still works on in his home, loving the same Lord and ever growing nearer into His likeness.

A postal card does not mean much, but the card which I received from Jim last Christmas morning meant much to me, for it brought back, as such tokens always do, the memory of *that beginning, which was made in boyhood.* That verse, "In thy presence is fulness of joy," never means so much as when we learn its meaning in the companionship we have with Him in *personal service.*

II
THE MEN TO REACH

"And there went out with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."—*I Sam. 10: 26.*

"Moses chose able men out of all Israel.—*Exodus 18: 25.*

"And they said unto Elisha, Behold now, there are with thy servants fifty strong men."—*II Kings 2: 16.*

"But the Lord said unto Ananias, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto Me."—*Acts 9: 15.*

"God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands.
Men whom the lust of office does not kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,
Men who possess opinions, and a will,
Men who have honour, men who will not lie,
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking.
Pure men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking."

—J. G. Holland.

II

THE MEN TO REACH

CHRIST died for all men, for all classes of men, for all kinds of men.

Before we touch the subject of Method, let us deal with this subject of Men.

Three general divisions are recognised: Constructive work, which, in itself, is preventive; general work, or working amid one's own surroundings; rescue work, generally known as working among the slums and with the fallen.

Kinds of men

In working among this latter class there is, aside from natural fascination, a very apparent condition of urgent need. Immediately every heart responds and universal human sympathy unites in the cry: "Save the lost!" Our Saviour's very words encourage us: "I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

The other two classes are not so popular in our consideration, and still are relatively of far greater importance when we consider the practical motive of our study and the end we have in view.

Taking up our first line of study, the constructive and preventive work, we primarily consider the child,—the man when he is a boy. The percentage of those who are won to Christ in childhood is very great. Those who have studied the question carefully give us facts and figures. From the ages of eight and nine there is a gradual increase to ten and eleven, then an extremely rapid increase to sixteen, a decline to twenty, a greater decline to thirty, and conversions are very rare after that time. With girls, the average age of conversion is from fourteen to sixteen, and with boys it is from sixteen to seventeen, although a large number are reached earlier than either date.

Childhood

Many of our church organisations, recognising this condition, systematically aim to reach the child through the direct church channel; hence, in the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, the Protestant Episcopal churches, and others, the "confirmation" formally reaches the child at an early age. The opinion is prevalent, however, espe-

cially among non-liturgical churches, that a child should not be brought face to face with this great decision for Christ until childhood has ripened into manhood, and boyish fancies deepened into mature thought. Here we are making a senseless error: the greatest impressions of our lives are the impressions of childhood. We are at the impressionable age. The Saviour Himself said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The child-like spirit every great man in Christ's service must possess. Many a child, far below the age named, is perfectly ready to accept Jesus Christ in the fulness of loyal, loving obedience.

This very work with boys is a most underestimated work. We lose our men because we do not win them at the very time they are becoming men. Within our very homes and in our Sunday-school classes, and under the willing care of the Church, we let them slip into manhood unsaved, at the very time when, with the least expenditure of time and energy, we might win them for life.

The Sunday school is comparatively a recent institution. It dates back only 130 years. Next year will be the anniversary year of the

death of its founder,—Robert Raikes. Since he gathered those poor children of the Cathedral City of Gloucester together in 1780, this great world-wide movement of Christendom has organised for us the children of the Church Universal. His work was for the children of the street. Ours has become a work for the children of the house as well. The world text-book of the Sunday school is the Word of God. The accepted standard of the teacher should be his qualification to teach God's Word and lead in spiritual instruction. Are we winning our boys to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Sunday school

As we consider the men whom we are to reach, are we not convinced now where our greatest field is? What the *boy is* the *man will be*. We have the chance with the boy; are we using it? Ten years from to-night the boys of Chicago will be the greatest human asset this city has; hence, what our city is to be twenty years from now depends upon the boy of to-day. The *boy* problem is in reality the *man* problem. It is rightly termed "*The Problem of the Future.*" Are we winning the boys and girls to Jesus Christ?

Boys

We are great boasters that "this is a man's

age." As we quote those words of Kipling, "We are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world of men," do we realise that that "world of men" is a world of "*boy men*," as well as men who vote? We would not be boys again, for as men we can win boys far better if we gain their spirit and value their worth.

It is very easy to gain human sympathy for the man who has fallen from a high building, or who has met with disaster, or accident. We are never too busy to take the time to call an ambulance; but we seem too busy to build a fence to prevent the man from falling! To give the boy strength of limb, courage of self-reliance, and intelligent insight will give him the ability to live without falling. This principle touches the whole great question of reform, and is the actual expedient in relieving the destitute. We realise it is far better to tax our cities that we may have the best school system, than to tax them for reformatory asylums and jails! It is the same principle interpreted in practical civic economy. Why not deal with the individual boys in winning them to Christ?

This department of our subject touches another great field of opportunity—that of the young men who are getting a start in life.

There are sections of this city and of every great city, where tens of thousands of young men may be found in rooming houses within a radius of half a mile. Walk north, south, east or west, any evening at the closing hours of the offices and stores. Take the surface cars or the elevated, and note the great throngs of young people centring here. Very many of them are away from home, without friends, subject to the natural instinct of companionship and friendship. They are accessible, they are impressionable, and they are the men of the future. Most of them are here through self-denial, willingly submitting to conditions of material discomfort in order to make their way in the world. They are solicited constantly by the forces of evil. They are subjected to personal and fascinating temptations. They are controlled largely by ambitions which centre in industrial and commercial advance; but they are responsive to that which is highest and best if they are sanely and sympathetically approached, but we will take up this subject again.

Students

Our subject also touches the great student world. More men are studying in higher education to-day than ever before. Not many years ago one-half of

one per cent. of the young men of this country were in colleges and universities; to-day the percentage is far greater. Not only educational schools and colleges, but our great State and National institutions and universities have awakened educational interest. Commerce and science have united in the splendid competition of present-day development. Many lines of business life to-day are not open to the man who is not intelligently equipped. The criticism that educated men, trained in higher study, are not practical men is becoming obsolete.

In this great student world there is an unlimited opportunity for personal work. This is closely related to our boy problem. If the young men from our homes, Sunday schools, and churches have gained the spirit of evangelism, and have been won not only to Christ, but to Christian service, they become the great communicating mediums of power to others. They become "cities set upon a hill" in their various college communities. They become centres of radiating influence for Christ among the men who are to be the leaders in the world.

The great student movements to-day, such as the Young Men's Christian Association and Student Volunteer Movement, are encouraging these very men in all kinds of personal en-

deavour. Many of these students are peculiarly susceptible to religious response when at home on vacation. They have been away from the home surroundings, they have been amid other scenes, they are appreciative of their privileges as they compare their lives with those who have not had the option of study. They are willing to think upon this subject if it is naturally and wisely presented. And then there are numberless students from other homes in our midst. Frequently, in parish calling, we find whole houses given over to students. In a single block recently thirteen students were found in one house, ten in another, and fourteen in a third. They were cordial, responsive, appreciative, and several from those very houses have become interested through the influence of one young man.

There are men who quietly, but faithfully, seek out just such young men, gain their confidence, invite them to their homes, and win them to Christ. There are medical colleges where medical men, physicians, can have peculiar access to the hearts of medical students. There are law schools where a lawyer can approach with winsome propriety the individual student, if he will make the effort. There are business colleges where a business man could

immediately win confidence with individuals, and later win souls.

Another phase of preventive work is found in the young family. Never a time in all the world when a young father is more appreciative of attention and congratulation than when he realises his fatherhood. He may have been indifferent to spiritual matters, but there has come into being in his own soul a sense of responsibility other than that he has previously felt, and he begins to think of his child's welfare rather than his own. Wise, inspiring friendship will win that home to religious life, and it is worth all the time it takes and the price of every sacrifice. Let us win men when they have their whole lives to give, when their hearts are plastic and their minds open. I would rather spend an evening in winning such a life and home to Christ, than to receive the public applause of thousands in a vast audience where an address might result merely in a pleasing appreciation.

We now take up the general class, or working with those round about us. In aiming to reach certain kinds of men we are apt to overlook the fact that the men whom we are most liable to reach are the men of whom we see the most. If a man is a

Men around us

genuine Christian, his greatest influence is where he lives and works. If his life is insincere and selfish, that is not true. Many a man has carelessly and wrongly used the passage: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." Undoubtedly it is far easier for us to work among strangers than with friends. Novelty is always attractive. The other stream than the one in which we fish always has the reputation for trout. Yesterday is reported to have been a remarkable day, and to-morrow has the unverified certainty of distance. The "enchanted land" is just ahead, or just a few miles away. "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, are they not better than all the waters of Israel, may I not wash in them and be clean?" But this is all fallacy, the real opportunity of a man is where he is, his greatest chance is the present chance near at hand.

A bank clerk can win bank clerks to Christ better than an outsider, if he is true and real, and if he is a man's man with Christ's manhood.

An insurance man can reach an insurance man or the boys in the office. The salesman can reach a salesman. Some Christian trav-

elling men to-day, one or two in particular, have won not only their hundreds, but their thousands to Jesus Christ.

How well I remember a wall-paper man who was converted in central New York many years ago. For years he had lived a careless, sinful life. He gave his entire heart to Christ, and immediately began to work for Him. His Bible went into his grip wherever he went, and was constantly read. One night, in a Syracuse hotel, four or five companions were with him. They said: "Boys, let's go out and have a night of it!" A couple of them linked their arms in his and said, "Come on," calling him by his first name. Answering, he said, "Let me show you something," and pulled out of his pocket a letter from a grandchild. Handing it to the ring-leader, he said: "Jim, read that!" The letter was in a child's hand: "Dear Grandfather, we are so happy that you have Jesus and have started for Him. Mother told me you had the Bible in your grip. Baby says her prayers for you every night. Please come and see me." And then a baby's signature. "Boys," he said, "I am on a different track; I am going up to read the old Book, and before I go to bed I am going to pray for you fellows. I wish you knew how happy I am,

I wish you knew what it was to have this kind of happiness." His words went home. Although a Christian but a few months, that man had begun to win souls to Jesus Christ among the men with whom he worked.

A banker in one of our cities was unpopular with all the men in the office,—unconsciously so. One day he expressed the opinion that he would love to do Christian work in a rescue mission or in the church prayer meeting. His pastor suggested, with frank definiteness, that he might begin to do some work in his bank among some of the popular young fellows who were subject to great temptations. He was man enough to see the point and took the hint. Within a few days he called one of the clerks into his private office and, after closing the door, told him that he had not taken as much interest in him as he should! That he remembered years ago, when the lad's mother died, she had spoken to his wife of the interest she hoped they would both take in the boy. He told him he did not know that he had seen him in church, but wished he would take a place in their pew. He wanted him to know that he cared personally for his spiritual condition, and was grateful when he looked at his own boy that his mother had been spared to

him, and not taken from him, as his had been. Before they left that office, that manly banker put the catch on his door and in a simple, earnest prayer asked God to bless the lad. It is not necessary to tell the rest of the story, but that young man is to-day a power in that bank, and is winning many of those other fellows to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why should we continue praying that God would show us "Harvest Fields" when he has placed us in grain that is higher than our heads, and every grain yellow to the harvest?

A teacher may have a marvellous personal influence with the men in his class if he is willing to exert it. A lawyer may invite many a colleague to the House of God or the place of prayer, where the invitation would be spurned if it came from another. A letter-carrier has a great chance to say the word for Christ to his companion when they are starting out on the route or waiting to sort the mail. A motorman or conductor has many a chance for slipping in the right word when they are waiting to take their cars. An insurance man has countless opportunities to solicit souls for Jesus Christ, even when at times he may not be successful in writing new policies. A con-

secrated farmer can transform a township in his generation if he lives and acts for Christ just where he is.

How about special united efforts? The revival has its place, but the best kind of a revival is the kind which takes place fifty-two Sundays in a year, through the regular channels of the Church and its various organisations. It is not commendable for a minister of the gospel, or an officer or member of a church to be more popular or more effective as a public or private speaker in other communities than his own. A man with one speech may make a favourable impression in fifty places if the speech is a good one, but he may have lost the power to make a second speech of any value in his own home! Superficiality tends to roaming, just as insincerity tends to discontent. The purposeless life is the story of the child of the fable, "chasing the rainbow." His chase is visionary and he fails to see the blended colours which he seeks in the very light in which he lives. There is a great place for the special effort, for the combined activities of the Church in re-awakening movements, but the maximum opportunity is in the ordinary and commonplace.

Special meetings
Special efforts

"Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of heaven in each we see.
The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask."

Acting upon this very principle, every man of us has an immediate definite opportunity of accomplishing great things for God. We may "Go home to our friends and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for us."

This winning of men round about us to Jesus Christ should begin in our homes. I wonder how many of us have children, sons, daughters, wives, brothers, and sisters unconverted? No doubt it may be the hardest proposition we can face to speak to them, and, perhaps, before we should speak to them or could speak to them with any influence, there are deeds and words and feelings in our hearts which must be overcome.

At home

A friend of mine once testified that he began his personal Christian service in soul-winning by asking his sister if she would give her heart to Christ. It was a lonely road along which they were going home together from the meeting. He knew she had been touched, but was unwilling to yield. Again and again he tried to speak to her. Finally, with faltering voice and broken sentence, he

abruptly asked her if she would not give her heart to Christ, that he had been praying for her. She burst into tears with the reply, that "she had been waiting years for him to speak." There they stood in the night together. She began a Christian life, which has been increasingly useful and abundant throughout the years.

The most impressive word of testimony spoken at the funeral of Mr. Moody was the statement of his son that, although their father had many times lost patience with them (a fault which was always corrected in quick apology and loving spirit), yet he himself had won each of his children personally to the Lord Jesus Christ.

From the great mission field of Korea, where, a little over twenty years ago, Dr. Horace Underwood kneeled with seven Christians in that heathen land, the sole constituents of the Church of Christ, there are to-day 150,000 Christians, and their aim is 1,000,000 souls for Christ this year. Thus they are teaching the lesson of doing God's work at home.

Some of the richest mineral lands have been sold for a mere pittance as worthless, simply because the surface soil was undesirable for the

planter; beneath the apparent barrenness of many of our surroundings there is the rich mine of priceless value if we will but gain the sub-soil by deepening the purpose and effort of our lives.

"He came to seek and to save that which was lost." Few of us as Christian men have not been deeply moved by the sad scenes where the wretched and forlorn have sought the power of religion. The heart responds quickly to the eager look of the castaway as he sees a long-forgotten ray of hope. Hollow eyes, weakened features, flushed faces, and filthy and ragged garments: all these appeal to us universally, and when fancy reads into these conditions the all too real facts of half-starved children, cold desolate homes, broken furniture, and broken hearts, our sympathy becomes extremely practical, and we say: "Of course we will work in the missions, only give us the chance." What a blessing comes from such service! How many of us have gained that blessing? How many of us are working or have worked in any of the missions, great or small, in our city? Might I add the question of how many of us will visit and encourage this noble work? Yet we all believe in this form of work and have

The outcast. Rescue work

seen, perhaps many times, blessed results from it. From the earliest history of the Christian Church this work has been honoured of God. It was in a little mission room in Rome which Paul, the prisoner, had himself hired, in which he spoke to Onesimus, the runaway slave. I can see this criminal, a fugitive from justice, lost in the tens of thousands of runaway slaves of Rome, himself a despised Phrygian slave, as he slunk into a back seat as Paul was preaching. He became interested, he knew the speaker was sincere; the speaker gained his confidence, until at last he confessed his story. His master was Paul's friend, he was sent back to Philemon to the city of Colosse, and in that letter Paul wrote: "If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee aught, put that on my account." What became of him we know not, but the Patristic writers tell us of one Onesimus who became a Bishop in the early Church. It may have been he.

But, why go beyond the experience of our own day. Jerry McAuley, a river thief, was won to the Master; his Mission at 316 Water Street, New York, has won thousands. Drunken tramps have kneeled at that little wooden bench to find Christ, and some of these

very men are to-day prominent business men in that very city. I have heard Samuel Hadley say that over twelve hundred souls have found the Saviour kneeling at that same bench.

To-day, throughout the American colleges, the life testimony of Mercer, to whom we have alluded, is another vital instance of rescue work. A graduate of the University of Virginia, from an old and honoured family, fallen to the lowest, but now reclaimed, and honoured and beloved by scores who have found the Saviour and received new inspiration through his splendid manhood and Christlike spirit. And in our own city, from the days of Moody to this present hour, this work goes on night after night. When we sleep, these noble workers are winning the outcasts to the Son of God.

Aside from these three classes of men, let us aim to reach strong, pivotal men to Jesus Christ. It is natural for us to seek those whose inclinations bring them to the House of God, or those who come instinctively under the influence of Christian teaching.

Pivotal men

The small filings are quickly caught up by the passing magnet, but not so easily are the great bars of steel lifted. Christ can use and

does use the weakest of His creatures to do His work, but let us follow Him in seeking those who are not so easily won. Out from the ranks of the rough manhood of to-day let us claim rugged strength for Him. Let us seek the granite cliffs from which to quarry pillars for the temples of our God.

Sin has stamped many a noble life with the marks of the lower nature; but once gained for God, the Divine Sculptor will cut away the roughness until He gains a surface which He Himself can polish. Out of a swearing fisherman He may make a fearless champion, —and he a character so controlled by sin that almost three years of companionship did not accomplish the work. But He most patiently persisted until at last that Galilean tongue that could so easily take the name of God in vain, was used in fearless defence: "Whether we shall obey men or God, judge ye, for we can but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

He called the "Son of Thunder" to His service and His side, that He might make him "John the Beloved," a seer among those who disclosed the mysteries of God.

And Paul himself, the hated, merciless persecutor of Judea, seeking the scattered pilgrims

of the Cross in Damascus, arrested on the highway by the Divine call, summoned into service by the persecuted Saviour, perfected through toil, sacrifice, and suffering, until at last he could say: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth within me, and the life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Men of the Church of Christ, let us seek the men who are real and strong in their vital influence and leadership. Let us reinforce the ranks of the King from the very ranks of the enemy, and let us have the faith, the wisdom, and the courage to aim to win those who will win others.

Years ago, in calling one afternoon, I heard and saw the sad story of a home gone wrong. I saw the suffering, shoeless children. I looked into the worn face of a patient, godly mother who worked on into the night to save her little family. I sought the husband, found him drinking, as was his wont, at a nearby saloon. Back of that careless drunkard's life I saw a man of splendid leadership and power. A day or two later I faced him in his shop, told him who I was, told him I wanted to talk with him, asking him if he would take a walk with

me Saturday afternoon, received a negative answer, took hold of his great, rough, square muscular hand, and said with a smile: "Well, I won't let you go, I am coming back to-morrow and the next day, and mean to keep asking you until you say you will." A day or two, and he consented, none of the men laughed at him,—he wasn't the kind of a man men laughed at. He was the uncrowned monarch of that shop, and his life of sin and carelessness was meaning the ruin of scores of others, although he knew it not.

We walked that afternoon over the hills together into the woods. At last I faced him. I asked him what he thought of himself, what he thought of his shoeless boy, what he thought of his half-starved infants, what he thought of his noble wife, fighting to the death alone, still loyal to him, patient in her suffering, uncomplaining in her work. I asked him what he thought God brought him into the world for, why God gave him his influence, how he was using it? He was big enough to annihilate me, but I did not care much then whether he did or not. But we did not stop there: I spoke of the love of Christ for him, that the Son of God died to save his soul, and that Christ would help him to use his leader-

ship to help other men. I might have told him of the men in that shop whom his career was damning, but we had gained another vision. Somehow, in that forest, we saw another woodland, and it was a garden. We looked off on another hillside, and on it were three crosses, and there, upon our knees alone, that great strong man broke his heart in sorrow and asked to be forgiven, and gave his heart to God. Of course, he had a fight, but he won out. A year later the owner of that shop told me he would take his own wife and daughters through that building without the least sense of fear, for they would hear nothing that he would not care to have them hear, but a year before he did not care to enter himself. That same shop declared a dividend and gave a pro-rata increase to the men on the basis of profit-sharing, as the result of the kind of work they had begun to do.

Men, God wants *pivotal men,* find them, pray for them, work for them, work with them patiently, win them, and *"where Saul has slain his thousands, David will slay his tens of thousands,"* and we will discover what Jesus Christ can do with a strong man, one loyal to Himself.

III
PREPARATION

"And the word of Jehovah came to Ezekiel saying, Be thou prepared, yea, prepare thyself, thou, and all thy companies that are assembled with thee."—*Ezekiel 38: 1, 7.*

"The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from Jehovah."—*Prov. 16: 1.*

"And next to him Johazabed, and with him a hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for war; those were they that waited on the King."—*II Chron. 17: 18-19.*

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."—*II Timothy 2: 15.*

"That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."—*II Timothy 3: 17.*

"Faithful prayer always implies correlative exertion."—JOHN RUSKIN.

"Let prayer be the key of the morning
And the bolt of the evening."
—MATTHEW HENRY.

"Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer."
—GEORGE CROLY.

III

PREPARATION

WE now come to the subject of *Personal Preparation.* This comes to us in natural order. We are to prepare ourselves for personal work. Some of you will remember where Gipsy Smith started when he first opened his work. You will remember he gave this initial thought: "Every one of us needs to draw a chalk mark, a circle around himself, and then work inside the circle;" and this is true. We are to begin with ourselves. The preparation must be here. We have many books telling us how to do personal work, we have teachers and Christian ministers who instruct us. We are told how to do it, but how many of us are really doing it? How many of us have talked personally with some other man, woman, or child, as to his or her personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ within the last twenty-four hours, or even the last week, for that matter? We are prepared, we say.

Preparation

We have the books, we know how, but we are not doing it! We are not "delivering the goods"! We are men, but we are not winning men to Christ. Our motive is right, we have the power, we know the kind of men to win, but are we prepared to do it? Have we the real preparation, or simply the tools? A friend sent me a fine tool chest one summer. Some of us like to putter with tools, so, when I got away on my vacation, my impression was that I could build 'most anything with those tools, but it was a mistake. The work done was not satisfactory work. The tool chest was excellent, my zeal was ardent, my motive was good, but I did not know *how*. The tools could not do the work. Books cannot do it. Preparation in mere equipment will not do it. We must have personal preparation. We must know how ourselves.

There must be certain great incarnate principles. The first of these essential fundamental truths is *prayer*. Nine-tenths of us as Christian people to-day are planning and praying, and this is not God's order! His order is "*Pray and Plan.*"

If we are to win for God we must begin by prayer, knowing that God Himself will lead us and answer us.

Do we actually believe that prayer is fundamental? Do we really believe that prayer is the primary *practical* preparation that we personally need. We sometimes say we believe certain things when we do not actually believe. How many of us really begin our personal work with prayer? How many of us actually start the day with prayer? A man asked me the other day if I believed in morning bed-prayers. I tried it the next morning and went to sleep. Thinking, perhaps, I was overtired, I tried it again with the same result. The third morning I said: "My friend is not built as I am. This cannot do for me," and I got out of bed as usual, in the spirit of prayerful determination and meditation. After a man has washed his face, he is far more liable to pray intelligently and fervently without letting his mind wander. Time and place and manner are secondary. But personal definite actual prayer is primary and fundamental. There is not a man of us who has not an ideal, but there are many of us who have experiences that do not check up with our ideals. Most of us are like children starting in to keep a diary. If they run for fifteen days in January they do well, but soon get discouraged, and no more diary until the

Prayer

next January 1st. Why not start in right where we fail? That is success. Why not start in just where we know we have continually erred, and begin now to do the thing we ought to do? This prayer is necessary. It is the first essential of success in this work. Whatever system or method helps you to be faithful, that is the best system of prayer for you. It makes very little difference what system another uses. Use your own. Use prayer as a power in your life.

The experience of prayer will qualify prayer in your own life. How many of us have had this experience? After praying definitely that God would lead us to do a certain line of personal work, or lead us to some special individual, the way was suddenly opened. We were all at sea how to reach him, but this opportunity opened in a way of which we had never dreamed? This has been an experience so many times in my life that it has defined for me the supernatural. Many others have referred to like experiences. No point of contact, no method of approach, a lack of confidence in myself, a distrust in any success of my own, when suddenly God so easily opened the way, and all was well. A dozen experiences are fresh in my mind where, without

any suggestion from any human source, method and opening have come through prayer.

A man once wrote me a letter as to a certain woman in the community who had large influence, stating that he hoped I would make it a matter of prayer that she might be reached. There was not a single plausible reason why she should be in our church the following Sunday, but she came up and spoke to me after the service, thanking me for the sermon, and introducing herself. I realised later that she was the woman for whom we had been praying. It seemed so evident, so sure, that the friend who had written had taken some initiative in the matter that investigation was made. He was more surprised than I. The world would say, "A mere circumstance," but we say "God."

In my life and in your lives there are illustrations all the way along. There is no human energy, nor knowledge, nor any human gift, nor any human adaptability, nor any brilliancy, which compares with the power of prayer in approaching men and winning men to the Lord Jesus Christ. If a Christian man does not believe this, he should pray that he may believe it, for the first condition

of success in winning men to Christ is prayer.

What may this mean to us, to us as individuals? It may mean that we are to begin to pray definitely for individuals, and pray that we may have the grace and power to reach individuals. How many of us are praying daily, specifically, for some definite conversion, praying that we may be used to reach some individual? We are not living up to our privileges if we are not. Many manifest that they believe in this work, but that they are not appropriating their belief! Are you not willing to make the definite attempt? Will you not appropriate it, and pray for some definite friend or individual?

Now as to the method of prayer in our own lives. There is a sentiment,—and it is a sentiment, not a fact,—due, no doubt, to our traditions and training, that when we begin to pray for individuals, and use the same methods used in business, we lower the real dignity and devotion of prayer. This is wrong. No possible criticism should be made of any form of worship which differs from that in which we may have been trained. I have preached in a Baptist church in the morning, in a Methodist church in the

Method of prayer

afternoon, and have read the Scripture in an Episcopal church in the evening, and the form of prayer differed in each service. One common Lord makes us one in Him. But when we come to personal prayer, any method which can make it practical and real in my life or yours, the appropriation of God's great gift to us, is the best possible method.

My little girl runs into her grandmother's room and, throwing her little arms around her grandmother, climbs up on her knee, and they read a book together,—a primer, perhaps, or a story book. That dear child will sit in her grandmother's lap an hour or more, and there is sweet communion between them, but there is none the less real affection in my heart for my mother when each night at the close of the day, before I seek my rest, I go to her room, whether she is asleep or awake, and quietly kiss her forehead. There is all the difference in time, all the difference in method, all the difference of age,—there is not one bit of difference in the devotion except one is more matured than the other. The essential thing is the reality of it. We can pray anywhere, in any form, at any time, if the heart directs.

Do you remember that an Indian prays with his eyes open? Once at the Indian Confer-

ence at Lake Mohonk, a converted Indian stood silently before us, looking straight ahead at the audience before he said a word. Finally, with great simplicity and force, he spoke. Mr. Smiley told us later that in his silence he was praying. His tribe had a custom never to speak to people until they first look to God with a frank, earnest face, to ask Him to help them speak aright to the people. That Indian was standing there before us asking God to use his simple message. What a lesson! Praying will so enrich a man that he will not let little things trouble him. Some months ago, when dining with a noble soul, one of us spoke carelessly in regard to another. She said: "Oh, let's keep to our subject; let us leave that detail to the Lord." She lived above the little things! The Saviour lived above those little things because He always had the power of prayer and communion.

I was once talking with one of the world's great men in his private office when his telephone rang. He excused himself for a moment, took the receiver off, and said: "Oh, I am so glad it is you. You say you are only here for a few hours; well, will you ring me up in a few minutes, I am busy just now with a friend." Gladly would I have told him to

proceed, that I could easily wait, for I knew from the way he spoke he was addressing a close business friend, and a man of large interests, but he said: "I am busy." From him a wonderful truth was gained. You and I may be on our knees when the telephone bell may draw us away from God, and we are inclined to let anything interrupt. We let anything come between us and the place of the presence and power of God.

Do we realise when we pray that the Almighty God is with us, that the Almighty, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Omnipresent God is there?

How can we "expect great things from God, or attempt great things for God," unless we give Him first place? If we thus believe and honour God in prayer, He will increase our faith in specific petitions. From the simple incidents that God has given as a direct answer to prayer, even in childhood, many of us learned this lesson. How well I recall one incident. Placed in charge of a large party of some forty children, we were all crowded into one of those great excursion carry-alls. Two or three ladies went with us. Realising the driver was somewhat intoxicated, I got him to stop at a country inn and sought other as-

sistance within. In my absence he started down a sharp hill with a railroad track at the foot. It was absolutely impossible to do anything. I was a boy sixteen or seventeen years of age. Instinctively I tried to overtake him, but, failing, I ran into an orchard, and down under an apple-tree, on my knees, asked God to save those children. I knew that I was absolutely helpless and cried to Him for help. Suddenly one of those women, once familiar with horses, realised the condition of that driver, and, taking the reins from him, brought the horses to a standstill before they got to the bottom of the hill. When I reached that team, breathless, I had learned the lesson,—that the absolute helplessness of a man is the medium of God's power. (I have learned more since, however. I would now pray as I kept on running). The one great thing we need is to believe in prayer, for " His strength is made perfect in weakness."

The second essential is study,—*prayer and study*. There is no easy way to knowledge.

Study

Study means work. No man can study for another if individual attainment is to result. Study may be simple, inspiring, attractive, but it must mean effort and faithful personal labour.

What are we to study first? *The Word of God.* What are we to study second? *Men.* What are we to study third? *Nature,*—that is, the natural conditions around us. What are we to study fourth? *Books.* Books include the history of men, biography, experience, and all that goes with them. If we study God's Word, Men, Nature, Books, we will find that such study will result in our real preparation.

What is the best asset of study? Not what a man learns, but what he learns *how to use.* You studied chemistry when you were in college, and thought you learned something useful, but to-day you could not recite the formulas if you tried. How about the names of the Presidents of the United States, if you were called upon to give them? The fact is, a great many of the things which are a part of our common education we do not remember. Probably few of us could start in at Washington or Oregon and give every State in the Union, but your thirteen-year-old boy can do it, and do it quickly. The fact is, we are not trained to be encyclopedias! This is not study. Study is not merely acquiring information, but learning how to acquire; how to adapt, and use. Study is not simply filling up our

minds. Some of the brainiest men in the world have been the most useless men. The secret of power is not simply knowledge nor memory. Not knowledge, but the power to use and adapt knowledge. Consider the difference between the Eastern and the Western mind. The Eastern mind is the mind trained to memorise. We had a student in one of our great universities who came to study in the department of physics. When his examination time came, six months after his entrance, every single question was answered verbatim. The professor, believing that he was an honest man, questioned him, "I want to ask you how it is that you have given every single answer exactly as it is in the text-book?" He quickly replied: "Why, I learned the book from cover to cover." He had committed that entire text-book to memory! He also said: "From the time I was a little boy I have always committed to memory; that is nothing to me at all." He had graduated from a college in Southern India. It would be a great task for us to accomplish. The American mind is not the mind that simply commits to memory. It is the mind that learns to paraphrase, to think for itself. Your child is not learning to commit page after page, but to acquire the thought.

He is trained to think. The American student to-day is the one who can think for himself.

Now the memory has a marvellous place in our study and preparation. You all know perfectly well how the memory may be used in studying the Scriptures.* Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the importance of memorising Scripture. However, we need more than this. We need a memory that can quickly relate a truth to life. What we need is truth that can immediately relate itself to life, and, with this in view, we want to study God's Word faithfully. Study it in such a way that it becomes part of our lives. That we can call upon it and use it just when it should be used. In dealing with men we must realise this. But use it for results, not as an exhibition of your own knowledge of Scripture.

In our preparation let us make our study the very best study we can give. How many of us study the Word of God to show ourselves *approved of God,* workmen who need not to be ashamed? Can we take His Word and use and control it? Do we take it as food, that it may make good red blood and make our lives strong? How many of us go without break-

*See "How to Master the English Bible," by Dr. James M. Gray.

fast, or lunch, or dinner for a week, and then make up in one meal when we hear a sermon on the Bible? What sort of digestion does this give, and what kind of muscle does it create? We must study the Bible as we eat our food. We must give our best to Him with the regular and full vigour of our minds.

But *TIME* comes up. *When* should we study the Bible? Frequently? Yes, but let us do it at specific times, and give God the pick of our time. Recently, in talking with a lawyer, he admitted he would like to study the Bible, but had not the time. Gladstone gave more time to God and to his Bible the very days in which he had the hardest problems to face. McCheyne tells us the harder the task the more time he took to study the Bible to prepare for it.

Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, who has helped so many of us not only by his friendship, but by his voice and pen, was once asked to speak fifteen minutes at the Mohawk Indian Conference on "General Missions." When he excused himself from an afternoon pleasure to prepare, one laughingly said: "Why, you do not have to prepare, do you?" He replied: "If I am to speak two hours I can prepare in fifteen

minutes, but if I am to speak fifteen minutes it will take me two hours to prepare."

Many of us do not do more in personal service because we do not know the Bible well enough. We do not do more of this work because we do not know how to use God's Word. We are not equipped. My experience is, that a study of the Bible which is primarily a devotional study, a personal soul study of the Bible, the study that my own soul needs, is the most profitable. Nine-tenths of all the sermons some of us preach come out of our devotional study. We need the very truth as applied to our own hearts. In the course of that devotional study, before we know it, sermon after sermon is suggested.

The devotional study of the Bible will help us primarily to win other people. This study will lead us to use sections and chapters of God's Word rather than simply texts and verses. The thought and principle will thus influence and convince. To illustrate: In dealing with a man who did not believe in the individual method of winning men to Christ, and who would not undertake it because he considered it discourteous, he accepted an invitation to come upstairs, and we read together the chapter in Acts which told of Philip's work.

As we read how this man was accomplishing wonders in Samaria when God called him away to deal with one man, he said: "What do you think of that? I see I am all wrong. The fact is, God's method is not my method, I'm all wrong."

A student came to me one day and said: "What do you think of this editorial? It represents what I believe. It is exactly the opposite of what you preached last Sunday night, and I think you are all wrong." Upon asking him where the author got his authority, he replied, "I don't know. He is relating experience." We went up to the study and looked into it. As we read together the passage of Scripture without comment, he broke in by saying: "I see your point. The writer of that editorial hasn't the facts or the right premise." That student is to-day a missionary in China; all he needed was to study it through.

Know men

But we must know men. The man who is prayerful and is studying the Bible, who does not also know men, will never attain highest efficiency in winning men to Christ.

And we must be our own natural selves if we are to win men. We cannot drive men away from God by any quicker method than by using

a holy tone when talking to them. When some men speak of religion they seem to lose all the natural power God has given them by becoming unnatural. Gipsy Smith said wisely, If he were giving advice by means of music, he would go to the organ and strike the key of "B Natural." Be yourself and know men, and nature, and life, so that you can adapt yourself immediately to conditions. You can study men in the busy life of the city activity. You can study nature when in the woods and in the mountains.

Naturalness

Some of us recall the great influence at Northfield back in '87 and '88, when men like Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull, Dr. J. Hudson Taylor, Dr. John G. Paton, and others were there. We see those men now as they walked over the hills, as they walked amid nature, and kneeled with many a student beneath those trees to pray. Occasionally Mr. Moody would get up in the Auditorium in Old Stone Hall and say: "Boys, get away from these walls, go out into the woods, and think and pray, and let God speak to you through the Word of God and nature."

I tell you I have seen men won to Christ on a trout stream. Get your friend out into the company of nature if you want to talk to him

of Christ. Who is back of nature? God is. He loves the hills, the streams, the fields. Once, in the far reaches of an Adirondack trail, my guide asked me if I believed God lived in the woods. It was my opening. We had talked together of all the signs of wood and wild life. He had pointed out to me the old stump torn by the claws of the bear as he sought grubs and ants. Now he wanted me to show him God, and the Son of God. More than trout were caught that day. "Follow Me and I will make you become fishers of men."

Jesus Christ can use us and will use us wherever we are. It was a happy moment in my life years ago in the Adirondacks, when an old woodsman, old Dan, said to me as we sat before the old camp fire, "Would you mind, before we turn in, having a prayer and a short reading? You know I found Christ." I tell you, men, if we know nature and know men and are ourselves natural, God will give us results. Let us begin now. We have daily and hourly all the opportunities we need to say something for Jesus Christ.

Mr. Moody (and I love to refer to him, for I believe Mr. Moody and Mr. Spurgeon were the greatest human beings in the last century in

uplifting mankind) used to tell us that many a night, after he had gone up to his room in the hotel, he would leave that room and go down again to the office, because he would not retire until he had made a definite personal effort to win somebody to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have heard him say that he had won many to the Lord by just such efforts.

Practice

We can start now if we will. Men, practice makes perfect in this thing. Some of the men who have become the strongest servants of Christ have been men who have broken down, or failed at first. No matter if you do make a poor attempt. Who of us has not? Who has not forgotten the verse he meant to quote, and ended in apparent confusion and failure. Once I ended up by saying: "I am making a fist of this, but I'm dead in earnest." That was one of the best pieces of work I ever did. That man was mine ever after in close Christian friendship. Mr. Spurgeon was right when he said: "There is more in the matter of earnestness than in anything else if souls are to be won."

Prayer, study, and practice will prepare us to do this work if we are dead in earnest; and once having gained this holy enthusiasm, we

will not draw back. Our souls will crave this very work, and we will be prepared by the Holy Spirit and filled with His power. The "Greater things than these" shall be accomplished by the man prepared by God Himself.

IV
APPROACH

"A word spoken in season, at the right moment, is the mother of ages."—CARLYLE.

"Silence is less injurious than a weak reply."—COLTON.

"Many can argue, not many converse."—ALCOTT.

"A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds."—BACON.

"A man convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still."

—BUTLER.

"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, not yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."—*Ecclesiastes 9: 11.*

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God."—*James 1: 5.*

"Lo, I am with you alway."—*Matthew 28: 20.*

IV

APPROACH

HOW are we to approach men?

After personal preparation, nothing is more important than this subject of "Approach." Having the right motive, and recognising the essential qualifications of devotion, preparation, and sincerity, we must approach our man aright.

The place of "impulse" is not to be overlooked in considering approach. If a man is consecrated to God, under the direct leadership of His Holy Spirit, he will act wisely by following impulse. At times the incentive will be strange and unexpected, suggesting itself without any apparent cause. Usually it is safe to regard and follow, if the mind is normal and sincere. By way of illustration: Some years ago, when reading one evening, I was strongly impressed with the sense of duty to go to a neighbouring street and call upon a young man who had interested me, and for whom I had prayed. The even-

Impulse

ing was passing quietly and in solitude. Such evenings were at a premium, but so strong was this impulse that it was followed prayerfully, though with somewhat indefinite zeal. He welcomed me cordially, and was in a most receptive frame of mind. I frankly told him the circumstances attendant upon my call. That call led to his conversion, and he became a useful member of the Church.

Another instance, which emphasises the need of immediate response: I was once driving in New England with one of my little daughters. Passing the house of a somewhat notable character, who was ill, I was prompted to turn in and talk with him about his soul. Without the slightest hesitation, I drew rein and found myself approaching him as he sat in the sunshine on his veranda. Telling my little daughter to stay in the yard and play with the chickens, I hitched my horse and told him who I was, that I had known of him, and without other introduction, my errand was directly told. Already signs of deep emotion were seen in his face. He asked me in. Helping him in with his wheel-chair, I talked simply and earnestly with him, read the Scripture, asked him if he did not wish me to pray with him, and then poured out my heart to God in simple, fervent prayer. I

have reason to believe the old man was even more than touched, and that the directness of our united appeal to Christ found that same ready response which is always given. He died the next winter. The opportunity would not have been repeated. He was a rough, but kindly man,—a son of the forest. A man whose earlier years no knotty elbow of wood could challenge when he was swinging his axe. A man who once almost severed his foot from his limb when chopping, but refused even then assistance to the house until overcome by weakness through loss of blood.

Impulse unheeded seldom returns. And not only ministers of the gospel, but all Christian workers realise that many a life's sad experience is the consciousness of having failed and lost forever the following of a definite inspiration or impulse.

The irregular

There is an irregular way of approaching men, and this is a frequent way. Zealous, enthusiastic, eager, alert for an opportunity, we approach the first man we meet—anywhere, anybody. We may win him, but his response is largely relative to the strength of his character. Strong men are seldom won in this way. They reason somewhat thus: "This man is carried away

with this new notion, and I am the victim. He was out looking for anybody,—like the man hunting birds,—I rose, he shot." This method has been honoured of God constantly and has frequently been successful, but there is a better way,—not that we think the less of this, but the more of the other.

The regular

Then there is the regular, orderly method. The reaching of men through the regular church channels in the church, after an impressive sermon, in the prayer meeting, or Young People's Society, through special services, when organisation and inspiration prompt approach. However, the men and women who are usually present at the regular or special church services do not need the gospel as those who are not there.

Missions

In the work of the City Mission there is a greater field frequently, in our great congested centres. A large percentage here are without the gospel. Attracted by the music, light, or warmth, without shelter or home,—they are easily gathered. Generally their emotional natures are quickly aroused and genuine human sympathy creates an atmosphere of quick response.

This is also somewhat true in street work.

Whether conducted under the auspices of the Salvation Army, bands of Christian laymen, gospel wagons, or summer outposts in the parks; all of these afford opportunities in general to reach large numbers of people. A great many men ought to begin in these very places. It is far easier to get used to this work there than elsewhere. Men expect it. Conventionality is not known. Perfect freedom is the order of the day. These assemblies are democratic in form and conduct. A recent Saturday evening, in one of our Wells Street missions, a few of us who were present felt the influence of this very thing. A dozen men must have responded, apparently eager and willing to accept Christ, and anxious for our prayers. These men and women belong to the "down-and-out" class. They are ready for any genuine practical help, spiritual or physical. The inspiration of such work develops not only ability, but also inclination and readiness.

This we would call ordinary work, but there is an extraordinary work to do. By this we mean definite work for individual men,—men whom we have selected,—men for whom we are especially working. These men may be needy, neglected, thoughtless, indifferent, immoral, weak, or self-

Extraordinary

righteous. Whatever their characteristics, among them are men who are strong and influential, and men who have marked personalities.

Personality

Look out for the man with a strong, vigorous personality. Stop and watch those boys who are playing marbles on the street just now. We know that spring is here, not only because the birds have begun to sing, but because the boys are playing marbles and spinning tops. Yesterday I saw a crowd of a dozen or fourteen. One little fellow controlled the whole situation. He was the homeliest chap of the lot. But when one of the older boys imposed on a little chap he did not stand for it a moment, and the whole crowd swung into line. If I wanted to win that crowd of boys I would get that little fellow and let the rest go, for he had the whole crowd with him. No matter what their characteristics, get hold of the men with personality, they are the *pivotal men.* To win one such man for Jesus Christ means that he will be the means of winning hundreds. Some men can win their tens, some their thousands, and some their tens of thousands. Jesus Christ followed this principle in selecting His apostles. He selected men who

Pivotal men

would lead anywhere because of their striking personalities.

We now turn to the subject of planning our work. In all activity for God we should look ahead. Prayer precedes plan, but does not substitute for it. The most valuable lesson that I learned at the World's Fair in '93 was learned, not in any exhibition or building, but in the life of the companion with whom I came to Chicago. He had studied law before entering the theological seminary where we were studying together in the East. His peculiar method of conducting his devotional exercises, of saying his prayers at night, aroused my attention. After I had finished mine and gotten into bed, he would still be sitting in his chair looking off into space in an intense sort of way, and finally kneel and pray briefly. One night I said to him: "Judge, you certainly conduct your devotions in a peculiar manner, and I am inquisitive enough to ask you how you do it?" He replied in the same companionable spirit with some such words as these, "Well, I studied law, as you know, before I entered the seminary. We were trained to think things through before we started to plan our campaigns. I feel, when

Plan

Thinking and playing

I pray, that I am approaching my Heavenly Father and my Divine Friend. He should have the very best I have. Hence I think before I pray. I think over carefully the things for which I wish to express gratitude; then the things which I need and want and, after thoughtfully deciding, I pray from my heart." This is not only a suggestion as to prayer, but properly introduces aright the necessity of planning in our work. Aside from praying for men and deciding whom we are to aim to reach, we should study our man, study his nature, his tastes, his temperament, his training, his surroundings, his business, his employment; his inclination, his attitude, his companionships.

Some years ago a number of men were appointed to present a large philanthropic enterprise to one of our great national financiers. He was a very busy man, almost unapproachable, his time held in great value. Finally an appointment was made,—it was to be brief. The matter was to be presented in a few minutes. In preparing to present the matter in five minutes, the chosen spokesman spent five or six hours in getting ready to make a five-minute speech. He studied the man's life, went into the details of his experience, read magazine articles about him, studied his busi-

ness, consulted with some who knew him better than he; disregarded secondary matters,—cut out a story here or there,—discriminated with great care as to just what should be said. (Just here it is well for us to note that the man who is always known as a great story-teller is seldom known as a first-class business man. The first-class business man may be a good story-teller, but the man who makes it his business to tell stories and is noted for that primarily, seldom is noted for anything else. A great English statesman, when asked his opinion as to a certain diplomatic appointment, replied: "The man is not eligible: he is too prominent for his humour.") The success of this particular interview was the result of careful preparation for the few minutes of active conversation.

Humour

In planning for our man we should consider the *WHO? HOW? WHAT? WHEN?* and *WHERE?* of it all. First, *WHO* can reach the man best? If our object is to win the man, we will not care who wins him. Some men are approachable with one who are not with another. A zealous college lad, who was ill-kept and careless in his dress, as well as in his manners, approached a fellow of entirely different tastes and training,

Who?

whose linen was always immaculate, who manicured his finger nails, and whose trousers were always perfectly creased; he approached him in a ready, careless manner, clapping him on the shoulder, and asked him why he did not become an active Christian. It was enough to antagonise him throughout his entire course, and the Y. M. C. A. was always associated with unpleasant memories and an unjust opinion. This man might easily have been won by another. It was just a case of careless campaign, of ignorant and thoughtless zeal. If we are after strong men, let us plan to use the right men to approach and reach them. Business men are exceedingly careful who plans an interview, and by whom they are introduced. Frequently salesmen arrange among themselves who should approach certain firms and men, knowing that others would not make a corresponding impression. Heads of firms are most particular on this very line, not only in the allotment of territory, but in the assigning of individuals.

How?

HOW are we to approach men? Some by appointment, others by happenstance; some boldly, directly, frankly; others in general statements and quietly. Here more than anywhere else common-sense

intuition must be exercised. We must know how to be silent as well as to speak, how to refrain from criticism or expression, as well as to use audible argument. Frequently such men are reached by bringing them into the hearing of able men,—arranging general appointments rather than personal; discovering the kind of men who would appeal to them, and then making it a point to invite and, perhaps, accompany them to such a gathering. We also may plan new acquaintanceships for them with men whose influence cannot fail to be felt, and this all unconsciously and naturally.

But, WHAT are we to say to them? *What* are we to do? *What* are we to follow up? Just as necessary as these questions are their opposites. *What* are we to refrain from saying? *What* are we to refrain from doing? *What* are we to let alone, biding God's time? The good conversationalist is not necessarily the man or woman who does the most talking! A good conversationalist is usually an excellent listener. Some years ago, when attending an afternoon tea (not that we dote on them), I found it quite unnecessary to have much, if anything, to say. Although talking with five or six women during the half-hour, I do not think I opened my

What?

mouth,—except to casually remark that "the tea was excellent." What was my surprise when, coming down the stairs, hat in hand, to overhear two or three ladies speaking my name, and, all unconscious that I was near, I heard them say enthusiastically: "Isn't he a charming conversationalist?" I learned my lesson.

The best way to convince some men of the reality of the Christian faith in which they have been trained, is to keep still and let them talk. They may talk against theories and dogmas which are very clear to you. They may criticise right and left, but if we keep a sweet spirit and do not antagonise in reply, very frequently they come around of their own accord and confess that they are talking for the sake of talking.

We used to do the same thing when we came home from college. We were filled up with new thoughts as to philosophy, we were proud that we were studying psychology, we had gotten well into logic, then rhetoric, and we loved to talk with our mothers, and tell them how illogical the old faith was, and how absurd many cherished beliefs of childhood; but, if our mothers did not antagonise us, but showed the same sweet spirit which they had always shown, after a while we came around and admitted in

our boyish language that we were "talking through our hats." It was simply a case of "trying our wings."

It is not always WHAT we say. Truth does not always need a defender, nor theology an apologist. A great many times a quiet, gentle spirit wins when a brainy argument drives away.

One of the most interesting cases came to my mind about two or three years ago. I was calling at the Christmas season upon one of our faithful and honoured missionaries, who, with his wife, was at home on his furlough from South America. He and his noble wife met me with dimmed eyes, but they were tears of rejoicing. "I have just had the happiest Christmas gift of my life," he said. He then went on to tell me it was a letter from his son, a merchant in a South American city, who had just written to them of his earnest conversion. The wife of this son was a Romanist. The priest in their city had come to talk with him and win him over to Romanism. The young man, schooled from childhood in the Scripture, had argued with the priest, and apparently worsted him at every step; finally the priest went away disgusted and angered. The young man said to his wife: "Why, I believe all this

I have said to him,—I really believe it!" It resulted in his uniting with the Church, and his wife coming with him. The very means which we sometimes use to argue men into the Kingdom seems to stir up the worst side of their opposition. It might almost be well to take the other side with some men, merely for the sake of argument, that we might act as mirrors to show them their real belief in their own natural truthful response.

The *time* of approaching men is most important. Wise men always plan their time.

When?

Why approach a man just before dinner, or in the busiest moment in his office, or when his mind is filled with other things? Why take the time which is due to his children and his home, and rob him of his greatest joy and comfort? Then, if we are patient, there are certain times which are peculiarly apt. You have been waiting for the right time, perhaps waiting for years. There is a wreath near the bell at the front door, and a bit of crape or ribbon; don't speak to him then, when his heart is so tender. The pathos of the Cross is *the return from Calvary!* Look at Herbert Schmalz' great picture, "The Return from Calvary," as he portrays this very scene. A rift in the cloud shows the three

crosses on the distant hill. The Roman Guard is moving out of the city. Mary, the mother of Jesus, abject and hopeless, leans upon the bosom of John as she takes his arm. Mary Magdalene gives all her attention to the prostrate Mother. The others look back over their shoulders to the crosses. It is the *return from Calvary!* Those long days and long evenings will soon come. Your friend will be at home and alone. The busy, rushing street has ceased to know his sorrow. Even the careless cartman tried to quiet his horse as he passed the house when the service was going on, but the world has now long since forgotten. There is a time now. It is God's time. It is your opportune time to let heart and head act in thoughtful emotion, and all because of a wise, sympathetic friendship.

Where?

Anywhere? Yes, everywhere. But the trysting-place is God's place. Let associations hallow certain places. Old scenes call forth latent forces. Seek to get men to the places where they are naturally impressed; among the companions who will help. It may be a walk together on a half-holiday. It may be the planning of a two weeks' vacation together. The result of many a vacation has been the winning of strong men

to Christ. It may be a day's outing. It may be a call. All this may have been arranged by 'phone, by letter, or by invitation far ahead. No method will be seen in it, but the result may prove the wisdom of your far-seeing plan.

But always remember that two are a company and three are a crowd.

Never talk personally with men as to their soul's salvation when three are present. Seldom even with a man and his wife,—except when a little baby binds them together in the new joy which has transformed a house into a home. Always have a man alone, and talk to him where there can be no possible interruption of word or view from another. Let a man talk it over with his wife usually, rather than trying to see them both; Christ usually called men one by one, and great soul-winners have been dealers with individuals.

Never hurry, take plenty of time. If not successful once, come back and back again.

Perseverance

Never make the error of persisting in winning men the first time you call. Almost invariably you will lose them. Win a man's confidence, no matter how long it takes. Then the matter of winning his soul and life will not be difficult. The greatest surgeons are the men who are never hurried

in their private offices. Scores may be waiting without, but their best attention is given to the individual case; and in winning victory over disease, repeated treatment and operation may be necessary. This is also true in reaching men in business. I had an insurance man call upon me thirteen times before he wrote a policy, and then I did not want the policy half so much as I wanted to remain in his good graces, for he had become a friend. It would hardly be fair to say I wanted to get rid of him. Win the confidence of men. Show your sincerity, your persistency, your determination, but show it wisely, sympathetically. Don't try to wholesale your work,—retail it. Take time for prayer and thought. In entering a "tournament of activity" don't try to win the whole series in one game. Omit your argument,—show heart rather than head. Use earnestness, and don't be afraid of genuine feeling and emotion.

Always be frank. What has made American diplomacy known the world over? The Eastern diplomats cannot understand why American statesmen are so successful. "You have no great schools of diplomacy," they say, and still they recognise our strategic and statesmanlike accomplish-

Frankness

ments. It is nothing more or less than a frank, truthful, manly expression.

Let friendship do its work. How well I remember that manly grasp of a close, dear friend, who had lived and worked for years on the other side of the globe. We had been in close touch as the years had gone by, he working in his place and I in mine, both for the same Lord and in the same Kingdom. We met for only a few moments. We knew each other's friendship. When that strong hand grasped mine in farewell he said, "God bless you. We'll keep true to one another on our knees," and then he added: "I love you." As I walked from that train as it pulled out across the continent, I wiped from my eyes tears of real gratitude. The heart and head were working in true expression together. Let us be true to the holy emotions of friendship, and let us use them aright in approaching men and in winning men to Christ.

V

MEANS AND METHOD

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."—*James 1: 22.*

"The God of Peace make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight."—*Hebrews 13: 20-21.*

"The shortest way to do many things is to do only one thing at once."—CECIL.

"There are diversities of gifts but the same spirit."—*I Corinthians 12: 4*

"Let all things be done decently and in order."—*I Corinthians 14: 40.*

"God nothing does, nor suffers to be done
But what thou wouldst thyself—couldst thou but see
Through all events of things as well as He."

V

MEANS AND METHOD

THERE are two great means which God has given to us—personal human effort, and the proper use of the Word of God. Back of these there is the consistent, consecrated life. There must also be prayer power, a firm belief in men, and mutual coöperation in various lines of activity.

Means

Taking all into consideration, we have these two great forces: The part of God's Holy Spirit in the use which He makes of our personal effort, and the use of the Word of God, God's Holy Spirit in guiding us, and God's Holy Spirit in using the Word.

A question came up recently which was answered by a wise leader as to the use of the Word of God in winning men to Christ. I think he answered most wisely and practically. The verse method in itself is often helpful, but has frequently been misused because

not thoroughly understood, and because of the omission of the real interpretation and sequence.

The most successful use of the Word of God is not simply by verses of Scripture, but by the illustration of Scripture which brings out the truth, and gives clearly God's meaning as the Spirit interprets.

When we come to method, let us consider that there are certain natural primary means which must come before us, and, among these, I wish to emphasise two: Conversation and correspondence. (The second of these is often disregarded by many of us, or at least is not sufficiently emphasised.)

Method

Correspondence

The most ordinary means, and that which affords the greatest opportunity is conversation. At the outset let us note that we cannot be helpful in winning men to Christ in conversation unless we manifest the genuine spirit of sympathy. How many times all the way through the Gospel we read that Christ had compassion on the multitude! It was *compassion* in the heart of Christ that led Him to talk to the woman of Samaria. That led Him to look up at that man in the tree —Zaccheus. Compassion that led Him to

Compassion

Matthew. Compassion, as well as Divine insight, that led Him to Peter.

It was this that gave Him power to recognise in a man like John a deep, genuine, sympathetic nature and winsome personality.

First of all, we must love men if we are to help them. It must not be shown externally. No method should be seen. Any condition which discloses machinery or reveals method will usually lose power.

Machinery

People seeing method are led to misjudge the motive and purpose.

We should not do away with the method, but let it be unseen. In conversation with men let us first show that we love them. We must have a devout and genuine affection for men, or we will not approach them with the right spirit. The longer we live the more we realise that the spirit of a man is his great means of usefulness. We may differ doctrinally, in creed or in interpretation of truth, and we may differ from men in method and manner of thinking, and in temperament, but if we know the spirit of a man and that man sees in us the spirit of Christ, we can help one another. We must gain this at the very start in conversation, for this is what counts. We lose a man at once,

or we gain him at once, by the very spirit which we manifest.

This leads to the thought that in conversation we must be careful not to make an exhibition of our lives. Many a man has not been used by God because of his very brilliancy. His own wit, his own personality, his very intellect have stood out so that men have seen him exhibited instead of the truth which he would really give to others.

A rare leader spoke years ago to a body of students. His brain and ability so overcame him that he unconsciously made an exhibition of his life. The criticism of those men was just. The man impressed them with his intellect instead of impressing them with his truth and his message.

An exhibition

Now, men, if we ever do this in conversation with a man and draw attention from the message to ourselves, then men see us instead of the truth.

We must lose ourselves in service, and men must fail to see us, save as devoted messengers, if Christ is to be seen. We must gain conversational power in presenting truth simply, lovingly, sincerely, as we give to man the consciousness that our words are the very ex-

pression of God's truth, uttered for His sake. Then they will gain His Spirit, and will not listen to us so much as to the truth which we are speaking.

Argument

It is generally a great mistake to use argument. It may be a means to divert rather than convince. It was seldom used by Jesus Christ and His servants in winning men.

Of course, there are some men who must have doubts explained away, but usually argument is a cloak for something else, and very few men comparatively have been won to the Lord Jesus Christ by its means. You start in opposition and you provoke opposition, instead of gaining response.

In my experience as a personal worker, I have never known a strong man won to Jesus Christ merely through argument. Last year at the Student Conference at Northfield one of our best speakers, a man who perhaps belonged to the practical rather than the theoretical school, asked a class of about two hundred students how many of the men had been won to Christ or to a better life through argument, and not a single man responded. Finally, one man rose and said: "I was logically convinced by a man whose knowledge

of Scripture was far clearer than my own, but I had to go deeper than my mind to decide."

I think the best thing to do is to open the Bible and let the Word of God speak, without argument. We argue with men because we do not know how to do anything else. It is the easiest method in the world, the most natural way.

The man who knows the least about the Bible is the man who is always anxious to argue. The man who knows the most about the Bible wants to take the Word of God and read and study it.

You will find the man who uses argument like one using a knife-blade in battle against a sword, and God has equipped man with another "sword" with which to fight. The man of the world has all the power of human nature to refute the spiritual arguments you present. Naturally he does not wish to accept and take your position.

Fencing

Some of us may have fenced with broadswords. We used to love to go through the various motions in duelling. I remember once when fencing with a West Point cadet, he said: "The trouble with you is this, you only dabble in this thing once

in a while on vacation; we are at it systematically all the time."

This is our fault. How many of us are just dabbling in the things pertaining to the Word of God, without making the study of the Bible a regular, systematic exercise of our lives?

This is where we fail. We are using it as a plaything! If we used the Word of God and studied it constantly and devotionally, we would learn its power and gain marvellous skill in conversation in winning men to Christ.

Let us recall one other point as to conversation, to which we have alluded elsewhere. Let the other man talk the thing well through before you break in on him; in other words, let him talk first. He will tell you many things which will give you the chance to leave out many things you were expecting to say. One can condense what he has to say. Much speaking often defeats success.

I remember hearing a man some months ago at a convention. He had a splendid speech,—at least the last twenty minutes of it,—but his address was an hour long! He ought to have cut out the first forty minutes, and started with the last twenty.

At one time I had a very important decision to make. Going to the wisest friend I had, one

who lived very near to God, I asked him to give me the evening. We both went to another town nearby to talk it over, that we might be free from disturbance. He was a counsellor, and a man whose clear judgment was most exceptional and conclusive. He had that marvellous genius of mind which some men have. Speaking familiarly, he said: "Tell me your story, tell me the whole thing." He did not interrupt me. I spoke an hour or more, and then he said: "Have you told me all?" Then adding a few questions which showed me I had omitted certain points he desired, I talked a half-hour longer, and then another point was touched. Fifteen minutes more resulted, and then he sat and thought without speaking. In perhaps ten minutes he began and analysed my problem for me thoroughly.

Concentration

For the moment I almost lost what he was saying in sheer wonder at the exact way in which he had grasped the entire situation. Then he stopped right in the midst of his outline and said: "Let us ask God to take absolutely out of our hearts the personal element. I am conscious that you are thinking of me instead of our subject. I do not know why, but I am conscious that you are following my mind

instead of what we want to get out of this as to God's leadership." And then we prayed together that we might be led by God's Spirit, He then spoke, and spoke with concentration, discrimination, and power.

This illustrates for us one other thought—We do too much talking. Here is a man before us we want to help and win. We said last week that we must win his confidence first, no matter how many times we go to see him. You will win him when you are conscious that he has given you his heart, and that you have his confidence. Why, Paul could never have talked to that runaway slave, Onesimus, in Rome, if he had not won his heart! Do you suppose he would have told Paul he had run away from his master, Philemon,—the very one Paul was going to send that letter to? Let us talk less until we win the life, letting the man talk to us, and thus finding out what he needs. The wise man in this world is the man that has learned what *not to say*.

How many of us have written letters to men individually as to their soul's salvation? How many of us to-night can think of men who are unsaved with whom we have influence? Some men whom we know and whose confidence we have, are without

Correspondence

Christ, and we have never written to them personally upon this subject.

I am not pleading for a correspondence that carelessly throws in a religious word anywhere for the sake of doing religious work, or appeasing a fanatical zeal to do something. Some men always put tracts in business letters. Personally I question their wisdom, but admire their zeal. It is a far different thing to insert them in a personal letter.

But now referring to correspondence. In this there is a great means of winning men to Christ. A personal testimony in this matter from my own experience may help, even if it surprise. As far as I can judge (and we all realise how poorly we can judge results), this kind of service has directly won more men and women to the Lord Jesus Christ than any other, aside from personal direct appeal. More have given the direct testimony of their personal salvation resulting from personal letters than through sermons or special services. I can sit down to-night and from the record of sixteen years in the Christian ministry, give more definite results of men reached through personal correspondence than by means of any other single method.

The very success of business life to-day is

largely due to correspondence. Work which is not so much of a personal as of a constructive nature. The postage stamp has become a mighty means of power.

I went into one of our great bond houses recently. The president took me into a private room and showed me how great quantities of circulars were being stamped and addressed. Thousands could be turned out in an hour. What is this? It is the use of the postage stamp practically applied to modern business methods.

If you cannot use long hand, dictate a letter. Talking with a travelling man of New York City, he said: "I never let a day end without dictating a letter to some personal friend about his soul's salvation." And then he added quietly: "I want to tell you this: All unconsciously to me, three stenographers in the last few years have been won to the Lord Jesus Christ, won through the letters I have dictated, and in each case I did not know a single word I said was being taken to heart by them."

Another illustration. Young Mercer is called by a lot of the college fellows, "Postal Card Mercer." I had a postal from him this winter, when he was speaking to the Johns Hopkins boys on my old stamping ground in

Baltimore. Another came yesterday from an old Northfield Cornell boy, who is travelling in Spain, who had learned the value from him. He wrote on the card: "You see, I am 'Mercerised'!" He was keeping up that which had so helped him. This correspondence method can even be thus carried on with postals. It is the human touch through "Uncle Sam."

A letter

Now, when a man sits down and writes you a letter or a postal, you know he means business. You open the letter hurriedly and read: "Dear William, I am alone in my room to-night, and I have felt a definite impulse to write you a letter about the thing that is nearest my heart. I have been praying for you, that you might know my friend, the Lord Jesus, personally. You know what my life was before I found Him. There is plenty of inconsistency in my life now, but my heart is hungry to help you. If there is anything I can do to open this matter up, I want to do it. Don't answer this letter if it troubles you, but just know, *in my heart of hearts,* I am praying for you, and if there is anything in God's world that I can do to make you thoughtful I want to do it."

What will the receiver say? "Ned is certainly daft on religion. What has he got up

his sleeve?" He may say that, but he will never get away from that letter, even if he does. There is life blood in that letter, and human nature cannot get away from life blood! You cannot kill life blood with a flippant remark. Later he will say in his heart: "Now do you know it was a mighty fine thing of Ned to write me that letter. Look at the time he spends in driving in the evening. Look at the entertainments that are going on, and he thought enough of me to put in his time that way. He is in earnest,—I wonder if I am!" He knows that he values him, and he also knows that it was a tremendous effort for him to write that letter. The fact comes over him that this man really values him and loves him.

And then we can use all kinds of openings. Think of the opportunities that come to us every day of our lives.

A young woman wrote me: "I want you to pray for such and such a friend. She has recently met you, and she made a single remark the other afternoon that showed me she believes you are sincere and earnest. That is a good deal for her to admit. With the natural opportunity of approach that you as a minister in her community have, I ask that you will use your influence in calling, and I believe that at

just this time, if you can only get her to church, you could say the word that would make her life count for Christ."

A few years ago in Baltimore one of our pastors told me his heart was so saddened that no one was coming into the church at a coming Communion that he wept as he kneeled and prayed. Suddenly the thought came into his mind: "Why don't you use your pen?" He said he rose and immediately wrote eight letters. In some of those letters he used long passages of Scripture. He wrote them to eight young men in his church who had not previously confessed Christ. He told me, without another single influence, except following those letters up, six of those eight united with the church three weeks from that Sunday morning, and the other two came in afterward. A consecrated pen will win men to Christ, not as a substitute for the personal word, but as an assistant.

If we are to start on this method, it will become practical and natural to us through use, and in no other way. This is a direct way of preaching the gospel for laymen as well as ministers. It may be more to us as ministers also.

Starting

We are not using this means as we should,

and that is why we are not having results.

What are we here in this world for? For anything else than the definite actual help we can give one another for this very thing? How much real good have we done others? How much real help will it mean to our city? To our churches?

Will you not form the habit and gain the power by starting in *now* to do some of this very work?

I want to call attention to a wonderful fact in correspondence—*distance is eliminated!* Correspondence absolutely eliminates distance.

Eliminating distance

This acts like a Marconi wireless. I used to think if any important problem came up, the only thing to do was to take the train at once and go to the individual.

I have learned that we can do a great deal with a postage stamp or a telegram, and sometimes with a better result. We annihilate distance, and we can reach any one by this method.

To-day a letter came from India from a dear friend. It was so clear, so explicit, so far ahead of the letter I sent him a few months ago, that he has largely convinced me he is right and I wrong. Now I might have talked

with that man three or four hours without so satisfactory a result.

The other day word came to one of the ministers in this city that a classmate was staggering under a tremendous burden in the East. He sat down and promptly wrote him a letter, which said: "I am with you heart to heart." The answer came back: "You will never know how just in the moment of need that letter of yours gave to me a new strength and a new bound of courage, and I am going on in my work here and win out. Your letter is just what has done it."

Men, we are *too busy* to converse with men, and *too busy* to correspond with men, and it is the old thought over again—the man we were told to watch *is gone!*

The first eleven chapters of Romans taught that "Justification by faith" is God's method. But the twelfth chapter made the application and appeal: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable [common sense] service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

I challenge you to whom these words come to *begin.*

WHAT are we, WHO are we, and WHO is HE? And to Whom are we pledged? I challenge you to get busy for Christ with brain, heart, and pen, and if this is not your purpose, stay out of the arena! For the blessing we do not use passes from us. The power and strength which we do not use cease to be ours. We MUST.

VI
AN EARLY CHURCH ILLUSTRATION

"Whatsoever He saith unto thee, do."—*John 2: 5.*

"I know no future but God."—CATHERINE BOOTH.

"Who goeth the way which Christ hath gone, is much more sure to meet with Him than one that travelleth byways."—*Selected.*

"With bowed heads and open hearts we offer ourselves, we can do no more, and we dare do no less."—WESTCOTT.

"I said, 'Let me walk in the fields,'
He said, 'No, walk in the town';
I said, 'There are no flowers there,'
He said, 'No flowers, but a crown.'

I said, 'But the skies are black,
There is nothing but noise and din,'
And He wept as He sent me back:
'There is more,' He said, 'there is sin.'

I said, 'But the air is thick,
And fogs are veiling the sun,'
He answered, 'Yet hearts are sick,
And souls in the dark undone.'

I said, 'I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say,'
He answered, 'Choose to-night,
If I am to miss you or they.'

I pleaded for time to be given,
He said, 'Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in Heaven,
To have followed the steps of your guide."

—MACDONALD.

VI

AN EARLY CHURCH ILLUSTRATION

TURN to the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. We wish to study the best illustration upon our subject in the entire Word of God.

In this chapter we see clearly presented a most remarkable illustration of individual personal work. Notice the first mention of Philip in the fifth verse: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." Now go back, if you will, to the time when this man of God begins in the Church, when he is chosen a deacon (sixth chapter, fifth verse). And before we read that fifth verse, read the third verse of the sixth chapter: "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

Philip

What was the first characteristic of these

men?—"Honest report." What would you give as a synonym of those two words to-day? "Reputation"—yes, I want another word? "Character"—yes, another? You are leading up to it? "Consistency!" That is the word I want. "Honest report" means the consistency of a man's life. An inconsistent man is out of the work from the standpoint of influence. A great difficulty to-day in doing personal work is found in the inconsistency of God's children.

Consistency

Others say this, and we resent it, for we believe a large proportion of the Church of God to-day are consistent. Still, inconsistency is the first great barrier to service.

What was the second requisite? "Full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom." Now, if we paraphrase that sentence we would say—"Spirituality." They were men of genuine piety, but they were more. What is a synonym for wisdom? "Common sense,"—yes? "Tact,"—yes? "Cleverness,"—yes, but a more exact word? "Discretion!" Discretion is wisdom in action? A man who knows how to act wisely just at the right time. How is wisdom distinguished from knowledge? "It is the practical side of it." Wisdom is

Spirituality

knowledge applied. God wants men who know, but He wants men who have wisdom,—men who know how to act. God's men then must be men of *spirituality* and *discretion.*

These three words stand out first in this chapter as requirements of character—*consistency, spirituality,* and *discretion.*

Christ needs in His work men who have all three of these qualities. Not two out of three, but *three.*

Suppose a man has consistency and discretion, but lacks spirituality! Or, discretion and spirituality, but lacks consistency! Or, consistency and spirituality, but lacks discretion! He is not the man to do effective personal work for Christ. There are many such people. They are always getting into trouble, and cannot understand why. One of these is lacking; apology follows constantly, and ordinarily apology means weakness. Christ wants consistency, spirituality, and common sense in all things. This form of Christianity wins men. I was once preaching to a lot of coloured men in Baltimore, and laid down the law rather directly as to consistency of life. I said: "You must be consistent if you have the Spirit of Christ in your life, and then you must also be wise. If you are consistent Christ will use you,

but if you are not honourable God cannot use you." A man suddenly rose and said: "Minister, you are right, and I tell you now I am going to pay Brother Jones $25 that I owe him." Brother Jones, further back, got up and shouted: "Hallelujah, this is a revival!"

Do you know, eight coloured men were converted and received into the Baptist and Methodist churches (none of them happened to be Presbyterians). Consistency, spirituality, and common honesty constituted a revival there.

A man sometimes has a spiritual inclination, but lacks the common-sense consistency of life which counts. A man cannot be spiritual unless he is true to the ideals of right,—although he may be self-deceived or deluded. If, however, with a sincere moral and spiritual purpose, a man looks to God for help, God will give him discretion.

(Verse 5, chapter 6.) "And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, *and Philip.*" Now go over again to the eighth chapter, the fifth verse, which we were considering: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."

Is there a distinction between preaching

Christ and preaching about Christ? Is there a distinction between preaching in the Power of the Spirit, and preaching about the things of the Spirit? The point I want to bring out is that "He preached Christ."

If a man preaches Christ he must have Christ in him. He may preach about Christ without having Christ in him. There has been too much preaching *about* Christ and *about* the Word of God, and not enough preaching Christ and the Word. It is certainly true that the man who preaches Christ and preaches the Word has a hearing to-day, but there are countless men who are preaching about Christ and about the Word who do not have. What the world wants is Christ, and Christ must be incarnate in man if He is to be real.

Preaching Christ

But this verse has also the thought of simplicity: "He preached Christ unto them." What was the result? "The people with one accord *gave heed* unto those things which he spake." What is the rest of that verse? "Hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." What word do we want now? "Results." The greatest testimony of effective service is the *result* of that service. You do not have to tabulate results in order to

Results

have people believe them. Some one has said: "There are three kinds of lies in the world—white lies, black lies, and statistics!" If results are gained in the lives of men, they are not merely figures. These results have become realities, and people believe.

People cannot be permanently deceived in what they see and hear. What did Peter say when the Council told him to keep his mouth shut and stop preaching? He fearlessly replied: "We cannot but speak the things which we have *seen and heard.*" The result was sure because of what he had seen and heard. Miracles had counted. It was so in Samaria. The result was that "Unclean spirits cried out with a loud voice and came out of the people possessed with them."

What is the order of such service? Simplicity, attention, results.

What next? Read the eighth verse: "And there was great joy in that city." Put down the word "Happiness." God wants happy faces and happy lives and enthusiastic service. You know the word enthusiasm means "God in us," and that means joy. The first chorus at Bethlehem was the joy cry of the angels: "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to

Simplicity, attention, results, happiness

all people." We have no right to be anything but happy, and if we are happy in our Christian lives almost all our difficulties will be removed.

I was tired out last night. I went to sleep and woke up this morning a new man. Everything I considered last night troubled me. As I tossed, this verse came to mind: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." Sleep followed and I woke up this morning as happy as a lark. God wants us just to trust Him and be cheerful. Did you ever know a cross man who was helpful? You pick up the telephone in the morning and the exchange does not answer promptly. You say excitedly: "Well, I have been trying to get this number for five minutes." We do not realise that the telephone girl is human. And then we perhaps say: "Who is this, anyway?" (and that remark will anger anybody over the telephone).

Think of a Christian man starting in the day that way. Why not realise: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

How much new business can a man do in that way? The business men who are successful are those who are cheerful and con-

sistent,—men who carry good nature with them.

Many a man to-day is unsuccessful in his business life simply because he has not realised that God can help him overcome ill-temper.

"There was great joy in that city." Well, "Simon" came along (verse 13). He had his hand in his pocket! He was a mercenary man! He was the man looking out for everything that was coming his way. Read verse 9: "There was a certain man called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women."

If you are a personal worker for God, chosen because you are consistent and spiritually minded and discreet, and if you have gone at your work in simplicity, people have given you attention. But you will surely find some people who are hypocritical. Do not let them

trouble you. Perhaps some are making the Church a ladder for social climbing. Some years ago a woman wrote to me, saying, "I want my son to join your church, because I am socially ambitious for him." (I had a talk with each of them before he joined.) There are also people who are associated with the Church who are doing wrong.

But note, Philip did not say anything about Simon. Do you know the best way to destroy these things? Preach Jesus Christ and win men to Him. "Overcome evil with good." The evils of to-day have in some cases received advertisement from the good people who have talked of them. Philip did not do that. He just went on preaching Christ. What was the result? (Verse 12.) "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised." "And when they *believed*." Men came; men will come as the jailer came to Paul that night and will say: "What must I do to be saved?"

We do not realise that we will not be condemned for our sin, but for our unbelief. This point is not emphasised in dealing with the unconverted. Men are not going to be condemned for their sins, but for their *unbelief in*

Christ. Because they do not *believe.* The great sin is the sin of *unbelief!* Every other sin is related to it. And *belief* is very definitely associated with life. When men believe, what follows and what the results? "They were baptised, both men and women."

Confession

A word suggested by this statement as to confessing Christ. I like the word "confession" better than the word "profession." "If ye confess Me before men." The word "profession" is much associated to-day with "professional." It is not enough to lead men to belief, we want to lead them into open confession of Christ by uniting with His Church. Go with them, if wise, when they take this step.

In the 25th verse we read: "And they, when they had testified and preached the Word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." But the 26th verse surprises us, "And the Angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.'"

What a strange command! Was not his work being greatly honoured? Could this be God's command?

What did Philip do? *"He went." Immediate response.*

Spontaneous obedience to God's call. That meant no reasoning, no argument. It was the definite, quick response of his life to God's order and direction. I think almost any minister of the gospel or Christian worker would naturally question, if in Philip's place, why he should leave Samaria. We cannot help being influenced by numbers. Could not Philip have justly said, "Think of these poor despised Samaritans, they are happy and believing, and are confessing Thee. Oh Lord, why take me away from this work? I surely ought to stay here and reap these great results for Thee!" No, God said, "Go to the desert," and Philip *went to the desert.* God never sends a man without going before him. God spells his word "Go"—"C-o-m-e." God's "go" always means "come." You can trace it from Genesis right through the Word of God. When He told Noah to go into the Ark He said: "*Come* thou into the Ark." He never sent a missionary to a dark land without going before him. Keith Falconer, when a young student of England, a rare linguist in Eastern languages, said, "I am going to

Obedience

Go and come

Keith Falconer

Arabia." He went there, but he followed Christ in going. Christ was in Arabia before him. He died there, but what has he done? Hear the great echo coming back to-day from the men who are going to that land. Keith Falconer heard God say "Go," but it was "Come."

Alexander Duff did not say in India, "God sent me here,"—no, "God *called* me here."

Alexander Duff

God never sends us anywhere that He does not go ahead and make ready for us.

In the next chapter of Acts (verse 10), we read that when Saul of Tarsus was converted God went ahead to this city of Damascus; "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Behold, I am here, Lord.'" The Divine messenger continues, "For behold, this man, Saul of Tarsus, prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight." . . . "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles." The 17th verse says: "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands

on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, *hath sent me,* that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

God *always* goes ahead of us to prepare the way. If one of us has a peculiar incentive to do some concrete personal work for God, be assured Jesus Christ will go before you and prepare the way.

Well, what did Philip do in the desert? (Verse 27.) He found a needy man there, "a man who came to Jerusalem to worship." Be careful how you criticise the man who does not agree with you in his particular faith. There are those who do not believe just as we do as to Jesus Christ and His teaching, and sometimes we instinctively say, "I cannot have anything to do with these people."

The desert

There are also those who differ from us in their forms of worship. Wait, they may be reading in the desert, and our hostile attitude may keep them from the truth. Our question should be, are they sincere men, not, do these men agree exactly with me. If we have the truth, let us ask God to give us power to give it to them.

(Acts 8: 28-30.) This Ethiopian "was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip *ran* thither to him and heard him read the Prophet Esaias."

What did Philip do—walk? No, he *RAN!* Study in the Scripture the word "ran." "Running" is Scriptural exercise. Did you ever notice how David met Goliath? He picked up the stones, and then he *RAN* toward him. I can see him stop a moment and poise himself as he whirled that sling. Christ wants us to be *aggressive* for Him.

Running

Did you ever see a football team win that simply did defensive work? You won't put the ball over the goal line for a touch-down simply by defensive play. Offensive play is needed. Defensive work has its place, but what the Church needs is offensive, aggressive work for Him.

Philip *RAN* to that chariot. He could not get there fast enough. See what sort of a reception awaited him. He was in earnest. Earnestness glows, it attracts. We need more enthusiasm to do His work aright.

Earnestness

I wish I had time to tell you about a lad who started a church in one of our suburbs in Baltimore. No one encouraged him, but he saw the opportunity. One day, calling his dog to follow, he said, "Come on, Fido, let's go out into the woods and pray it all out. The Lord is with us." It was nothing more or less than his belief in God and his splendid *running to his work*. A splendid growing church of over two hundred members is now the result. Read Mr. Moody's sermon on "Enthusiasm." I have read it many dozens of times. It will help you *run* to your work.

The open Bible did the rest. Two or three Jews were interested in the gospel but still did not give their hearts to God. Those men began to read the Gospel of John, and the result was their conversion. They became most active men in their own city, and are to-day.

Open Bible

(Verse 30.) Philip said to the eunuch, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" and he replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."

Think of the democracy of reading and studying God's Word! Here was this noble-

man saying to a desert stranger, "Come up and sit in this chariot and read with me."

(Verses 34-35.) The eunuch said unto Philip (and reading the Bible will always set people to asking questions), "Does he speak of himself or some other man?"

"*Then* Philip opened his mouth and began *at the same Scripture,* and preached unto him Jesus."

If our hearts are right before God and we know the Word, we can begin at that same Scripture and win men.

The greatest personal work is with the open Bible, when men go through a chapter together, taking time to do it thoroughly, not hurriedly and excitedly, but where we can go into it carefully.

We can reach men as they are going, and go with them till decision comes.

(Verses 36-37.) "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (And, thank God, that is the only requisite that Jesus Christ asks.) I do not know an Evangelical Church that will ex-

clude a man from confessing Christ, if he will express this simple faith. If he sincerely says, "Lord, I believe."

It was Jesus Christ whom he had preached to the eunuch. "I believe," he said, "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

(Verses 38-40.) "He commanded the chariot to stand still; and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea."

Suddenly Philip vanishes, and is not heard of for twenty-five years.

This is one of the best examples of unrecorded service we have in all the Scripture. The missionaries from Africa have told us that down in that dark continent of heathenism, where there is not a written language, they find a tradition passed on from generation to generation, that a great soul far up in the North Country died on a cross for his fellow-men, that somehow the mighty God might be appeased. From mouth to mouth, for twenty

centuries,—almost sixty generations,—in a land of sin and wretchedness and night.

In this wonderful story we have found an illustration of the Almighty God saying to some of us, "Do not think so much about numbers, about records and statistics and annual reports, but go into the desert for one soul." The desert is the place where Moses found God! And Paul, and John the Baptist, and Christ. In the desert they found Him.

And in that desert He may still be found. Philip found his greatest follower there. There He may give to us the power to reach single men individually, and open to them the Scriptures, that they may go on their way rejoicing.

"Where He leads me I will follow."

VII
THE MAN WHO IS INDIFFERENT

"There is less practical discouragement in the opposition of bad people than in the inertia of good people."—Dr. Boyd.

"The depreciation of Christianity by indifference is a more insidious and less curable evil than infidelity itself."—Whately.

"Ring out the care, the want, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times,
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in."

—Tennyson.

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."—*Colossians 3: 23.*

"Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."—*Revelation 3: 16.*

VII

THE MAN WHO IS INDIFFERENT

SOME words have become trite from necessity; simply because they have no exact synonym. This word "indifferent" is an illustration. It has no synonym which exactly defines the class. By far the largest number of those who are unreached to-day belong to the "indifferent,"—those who are without any real interest in vital Christianity. They may be subdivided many times, for among their number all kinds of differing conditions and temperaments are found,—the self-satisfied, the egotist, the self-righteous, the critic, the cynic, the worldly-wise, the careless, the weak, the coward, the inconsistent, the unforgiving, the blackslider, the hardened: all these and many others have their place within the ranks of the indifferent. This is the greatest field of opportunity we have, and still we are inclined to feel that the indifferent man is an impossibility. If this were the accepted con-

clusion in the business world to-day, how quickly commercial activity would retrograde. On the other hand, the indifferent men form the great battlefield of enterprising business activity. The mere motto, "Write New Business," faces this field of indifference and conquers it. The man who lacks interest is the very man whom we should try to win.

We are not to let him think we are trying to win him. If wise, we will not even let him infer that we look upon him as belonging to this class. If we are to gain his interest, we simply handicap our approach if we give him the impression that we look upon him as a problem. Let us rather consider this man sanely and practically. He is not indifferent by purpose, but by result. To misjudge or misconstrue his motive in life is unfair. He has not aimed at a life of religious indifference. Frequently the very fact that he is so tremendously in earnest in other things is the cause of this very effect.

Absorbed

The greatest cause of religious indifference in our day is found in *man's* engrossing fidelity to other things. Most men are not spending their time in the pursuit of culture, philosophy, art, literature, logic, but are controlled with life's affairs. Esti-

mating from personal experience, over fifty per cent. of the men who do not attend church and who are looked upon as indifferent to all church matters, if approached frankly, will say something like this: "Well, I ought to be in the Church and should take more interest. I want my boy to be in the Church and Sunday school. I believe in the Church and in Christianity, but the fact is I have been too busy, and I am too busy."

It is not his opposition to the Church, nor his critical attitude. He is absorbed in other things.

Among young men, the pursuit of pleasure is oft-times absorbing, and with some this is not entirely overcome in maturer years, especially where self-indulgence or appetite controls. The recent rapid development of cheap forms of amusement and public entertainment, not only in our great cities, but in our towns and even rural districts, is noteworthy. More than one magazine writer has recently quoted statistics showing the vast amount of money being spent in erecting places of amusement. In some communities more money has been spent recently upon this form of structure than upon any other. Where there is a demand there will be a supply, and a

Pleasure

pleasure-engrossed people seem to become intoxicated with the mere temporal fascination of the hour, heart and mind absorbed in this desire to have a good time. There is something pathetic, as well as prophetic, in the long line of varied humanity edging its way forward step by step before one of our cheap theatres at the matinée. Just in the thick of the busy hours of valuable time, amid the throb of activity and the enterprise of the thrifty, we see men, women, and children, well-dressed and ill-clad, crowding each other forward with the one thought of the best seat possible at the cheap show.

But this form of absorption is not the primary one, especially in the industrious age in which we live. The larger share are intent upon the things which have to do with their engrossing ambition. They may be selfish, but they are thrifty. They are enthusiastic children of a far too material age. Bodies and brains grow so tired and wearied with six days' hard labour,—and too frequently a seventh day,—that their indifference becomes almost a physical necessity. With perfect frankness they say: "We have no time for the Church or Christian activity." Then, when physical break comes, they

Overworked men

are usually incapacitated both mentally and nervously, to face the great moral and spiritual question. These men must be reached, for the very qualities which now direct their lives, if rightly attracted and guided within the Church of God, will accomplish great things. These men are being reached Men are to-day coming, chosen by their fellow-men to lead in the great religious enterprises which are meeting with such marked success. These men are harnessing business ability with spiritual enthusiasm, and, although before solely interested in other things, they are now giving like direction to the things pertaining to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

In the Word of God we learn how to win these very men. Jesus Christ sought men from this very class. Let us approach these men with a personal, intense, enthusiastic knowledge and belief in Divine Power. To appeal with examples of success and accomplishment is far better than the negative approach of failure and loss. In referring to the parable of the Pounds, as found in Luke 19, or Matthew 21, let us not quote the verse "Take from him the one pound," but the other side, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds," thus appealing to the man's opportunity. We have not

a Saviour who simply saves us from sin, but One who saves us for service. To arrest the attention of an engrossed man, giving his life to the temporal work about him, we must inspire him with a loftier purpose. Appeal to the opportunity to-day in Christian service. Show how a man may multiply himself as an agency for God in winning strong men. Talk of the men who have done something in life and are doing something in life, and skip references to the man whose life has been thrown away.

Saved for service

This attention cannot be gained easily, nor carelessly, but it must be the result of information and fact, and this means that we must cease using commonplace platitudes as to religious needs, and startle men by real and striking information backed by fact and knowledge which have become our own. The thoughtful man to-day not only has access to the best which the past has offered in the rare culture of the ages, but he has the ready approach to the present-day activities and accomplishments of those who are in the van of Christian service. To buy a modern book alive with such record, and inscribe the fly-leaf with a sentence which will insure its reading, may mean an arrested mind and an enthusi-

astic recruit from among these indifferent friends.

Again, appeal to these men with the argument of real life values. The appeal that the mere possession of things is not worth the disregard of all higher values is strong. By inference this truth may be backed up with such a reference as Matthew 21: 37-38. Those wicked husbandmen disregarded all law and justice through the terrible influence of the craving for possession. They overlooked the rightful inheritance, even to an insane foolishness of deed. We read: "But last of all he sent unto them His Son." So far did this insane craving control that they slew Him. Such striking illustrations demand attention. The hearts of most men revolt at the mere suggestion of such criminal extremity, but cannot disregard that a principle is involved. That principle suggests that men who are not criminals, or who would not even break the law, are to-day robbing life and themselves of their greatest possible inheritance in their thoughtless eagerness for possession. Of what use is money or mere possession if health and love do not make its use valuable? What greater possession is there in the world, what greater inheritance can you leave a child than

Real values

the training and memory gained by a God-fearing fireside? Will not this inheritance cause children to rise up and call the man blessed who has thus accumulated life's real values?

This suggests another opening too seldom entered. It applies to the man who has a home,

The home

—the man with a family. He is interested in his children. Everything which suggests real benefit to his children immediately appeals to him. No matter how dissatisfied he may be with his own life, he longs and aims for higher things for his children. Indifferent as to his own spiritual life, he instinctively responds to a genuine interest in their moral development. It is not necessary to deliver lectures to him upon child-training,—in fact, that is the very sort of thing he will not endure. But if, with genuine and frank approach, you show your interest, naturally he responds. It may be only a casual remark: "Your boy Henry is getting on finely in school, I understand. I had a short walk with him on the drive the other day." This may lead to another question, "Why don't you knock off a little early at the office and go out and see the boys play ball in the park some evening? They have a good time, and Henry

plays a clever game at third. It would do you good to get your hand in a bit and knock out to the infield in practice." That father may reply, "Well, that was my old job on the team at college." True enough, Henry will be surprised if his father does show up, even to stand and watch the game a few moments, but this very thing may not only accomplish your object of gaining an approach to the father, but it may also get the boy into closer touch with his father. Many an indifferent man is reached through his son in just this way. You now have an opportunity to talk with him about the boy. The boy is interested in uniting with the Church. He is thinking seriously about these matters. A single word from the son may influence the father to think seriously upon this very subject. The word will not be forced, but spontaneous, and the father knows it. This father is a representative of a great host of men who have not given religious matters a single thought in recent years, simply because of the absorbing control of other things in their lives. Back of all this exterior they really do value the genuine in religion and want to have their children interested to a greater extent than they have been. The child may lead the father and the father the child,

if we can get them in touch with one another.

A little photograph on my study mantel suggests an illustration. It shows a schoolgirl standing in her little sailor-suit, with her hands behind her back; her merry face seems almost to tell the story that she hates to have her picture taken, and wishes she could be out of the studio and away. She calls back to my mind an afternoon many years ago in a distant parish. There she is running like the wind down the hill from the street, where she lives around the corner, in lead of the other girls. I whistle; she hears me and is at my side. "Coming to call at our house?" she said. "No, not to-day, dear, some other day. Are you all well at home?" "Yes, indeed, but please come to the house." "No, not to-day, but give my love to all and have a good time. Here, I will time you up to the top of the hill, and all of you race." Of course she wins. No, she doesn't. When she was near the top of the hill she saw how hard the second girl was running, and how disappointed she looked, and she, little pretender that she was, made out that she was out of breath, and the other girl got there two or three steps ahead. "Oh, you fraud!" I shouted, but some-

A child's story

how walked the faster and felt a thrill of gratitude and a new impulse in the child's self-effacement and unconscious sacrifice. But one day she stopped after prayer meeting, and the little face seemed sober and so earnest, and we stepped aside a moment from the others and she told me that she was praying very hard for her father. He was such a good man and so kind and loving, and they were so happy in their home, but she did so want him to love the Master and she wanted me to pray for him, and she had my promise, and it was kept. One evening she had him at church, but he did not seem especially interested, but a few weeks later he stayed with her after the service, and she introduced him, and when she went by me as they went out, she said in an undertone: "Don't ever tell, but keep right on;" and we did. One Sunday night she came to church in the evening with two or three friends, and, when most of the others were gone, she quietly came up in front of the pulpit and said, "Are you praying for him still?" and I said, "Yes, my dear; let us go in a back room a moment, and we will pray together." The prayer was simple and direct, but the prayer that was simpler still was the brief, childlike, earnest petition that she made: "Dear

Influence

Father in Heaven, help my father to love Jesus the way You helped me to love You. I want to love Thee, dear Lord, as much as I love my father, and more, and I want to be good and to show him how Thou hast helped me. Help me to be obedient and kind, and help me to help him, and help him, please, to love YOU. For Jesus' sake." It was dark in the room, and better so, for when we slipped out into the light she was away with her " Good-bye," and, somehow, she seemed more than thirteen or fourteen in her faith life. But the prayer went on, and the father came, and Sunday after Sunday he listened, for he was regular now at the service, and one morning his face told the story of his earnestness; and that evening he came up of his own accord and said that once he had been more thoughtful and now wanted to be a Christian, and come into the Church. Then the happy day; the face of the child; the joy of her life, for only a short time before she, too, had confessed her Lord and Master; and now her joy was complete, and the father's joy was too, and they both were in the prayer meeting, where his voice was heard—and so simple, so manly, so fervent, so real. No wonder the child had learned to pray. How she always waited and came out the door where the min-

ister stood, and always wanted to shake hands when she said good-night! And somehow the little daughter seemed no more proud of the father than the father of the child. The months went by, and in a Northern forest, just returning from a fishing-trip into the woods, a telegram was torn open. It was from a distant Southern city. The dear child could not bear the strain of the fever. Her little life had gone, not gone forever, but gone ahead. The little photograph on the mantelpiece is still before my vision but I seem to hear the choir of a countless heavenly host, and as I seek my rest again, I find myself humming an old tune:

> "Around the throne of God in heaven
> Thousands of children stand,
> Children whose sins are all forgiven,
> A holy, happy band,
> Singing, 'Glory, glory,
> Glory be to God on high.'"

And this verse is on my lips: "A little child shall lead them." A child has changed indifference into loyal, active faith.

It is sometimes possible to gain the man who is totally indifferent by a direct, striking sentence. He had been at church a night or two before. He had not been particularly interested. The sermon had

A striking sentence

been upon the old patriarch, Noah. He showed no interest until the sentence was reached: "You cannot hope to have your son a better man than you are, unless *you* lead him to a higher life." He turned as if struck, and I saw his heart. The thought was amplified. When Noah said to his sons: "Come thou into the Ark," they followed him. He did not tell them to *go!* He himself was there first! You cannot push men up into the Kingdom of God from below, but, like Peter and John and the lame man at the gate of the Temple, you can *reach down* and *lift* them to their feet. I did not see him for a week or two. I was walking through a train to find a seat. He rose and asked me to share his seat with him. I knew his face and was not surprised to hear him allude to a recent sermon which he had heard. I said, "Yes, I noticed you were interested in one sentence." He was surprised and said, "What do you mean?" and asked me to what I referred. This was my opportunity, and I frankly told him that I had noticed his entire change of attitude when I referred to a father's influence over his son, and asked him if he had sons of his own. His face flushed for a moment, and he said, "That was the one sentence in the sermon that interested me, and I would

like to talk it over with you." A little less than an hour, and we were in the city of his destination, but we were friends. He trusted me and I trusted him. That friendship ripened. Within a month he stood before the Church of God and confessed Jesus Christ. His life had been careless, and sinful, and yet a popular life among men. He was a salesman of large merit. His boys, his home, his entire circle of business friends and companions, were influenced by his clean, strong, and loyal Christian life. A frank, clear-cut fact had won him.

Some men have been most successful in arousing intense interest with men of large worth by setting them to work in Christian activity before they realised what they were doing. Some years ago, in one of our great Eastern universities, a young man of influence induced one or two strong men in the freshmen class to take hold of a city mission proposition. It was not called a mission; they were not called missionaries. They worked with a lot of street boys in the neighbourhood, led them in gymnasium classes, trained them on the athletic field, showed them how to play baseball and football. They gradually interested them in a class of city and national

topics, bringing out and emphasising the real meaning of citizenship. The boys became enthusiastic, but no more so than their teachers. Before some of those college men graduated they were officers in the Y. M. C. A.,—one of them the president. Their influence during their college days was for wholesome, manly, Christian life, but they were the last fellows in the class who would have started in for any such activity.

Many a man at our summer student conferences is won in the same way. Some fraternity chum, some athletic mate, has prompted these men to attend the conference. Their interest is awakened by some strong address, or the personality of the speaker. They enter the classrooms which consider the practical matters of our city problems or the broad vision of a world-field with a different spirit, and, before they themselves know it, they become leaders and find themselves as the influencers of men. We term them "Finds," because they were not known before, but they belong to that great number of indifferent fellows, in whose ranks the Spirit of God has many of his chosen leaders.

Summer conferences

The indifference of some men is physical. A

man may be lazy, or immoral, in his life. In either case, until he is conscious of his own worthlessness or sin, he cannot become interested. The man who belongs to Lowell's "Common herd who only sleep and feed" is not worth the effort, unless the Spirit of God changes him into a different character. This second class, the man whose life is not pure, usually is dishonest as well in his intellectual aspect. He is very liable to place himself in the class of the doubter, where he does not really belong, for a dishonest doubter is not a doubter at all. He has no right to any intellectual consideration, for he is blaming his brain for that for which his body is responsible. The immoral and indulgent life which he is living is the cause of his carelessness and stupidity, and he is half-asleep as a result of his sin. Neither his brain nor the Church of God is responsible for his condition, but simply his poor, wretched, weak, worthless self. If this man can be led to feel that there is a Divine Power we can reach him and save him from himself; but usually it takes a dash of cold water in the face, by means of some sharp, drastic measure of reproof or justice, to even change his existence into life. But there is the other

Physical causes

man whose body is responsible for his indifference, but who really desires better things, and is an honest struggler with an uneven foe. These are the men for whom we should work and with whom we may gain results. I have in my pocket a letter received recently through two mutual friends. It is the story of a poor fellow whom drink and drug had made a hopeless, forlorn inebriate. A prize graduate of a Canadian college, an honour man in medical school, with bright prospect in the community where he settled, but one who gradually yielded, until he sunk to the lowest, and wife, children, parents, brothers, sisters, and friends gave him up as a hopeless case. But he found the Saviour, and in this letter which I would love to read to you, but which you will see some time in other print, he testifies of the love of Jesus Christ, found through the faithful confidence and patient companionship and watchfulness of a young minister who came to his town.

Saved

We need no greater testimony of the power to reach such men than the recent book of Harold Begbie, entitled "Twice-born Men." What that little Salvation Army woman did for the off-scouring of London, existing in that wretched district of the

Twice-born men

great city, tells us what God can do with those whose lives have had all vitality taken from them by sin.

We have touched upon the power through putting men to work for God. This not only applies to the college man, the business man, the successful member of society, but it also may be a vital force in reaching the fallen. A poor morphine and liquor victim had again fallen after many months of victory. He was not only discouraged, but morose. "What is the use?" he mumbled to himself. "Why did I ever try?" He was found when drunk, or partially so, and begged and plead for a little money that he might be able to lose all self-consciousness. There was no use arguing with him or reproving him, but back of all his weakness there was sympathy. "Jim, do you know there is a poor fellow that used to work with you in the woods, who is up the road drunk and friendless and sick. He is an older man than you are, but he needs a friend. I am going up to see him to-night and try to do something for him." The words were scarcely uttered when the half-drunken lad replied, "I will go with you. I will go up and help him." The old craving came back, and back again, even as we trudged to see his old pal, but the

inner motive conquered, with the help of a mere suggestion which was sympathetic. When I left him with his old pal, who was sick, slowly dying, I said, "Just remember, Jim, you can ring me up by this country 'phone if you need me, and I will get out of bed and come up here if necessary; but I will be here in the morning, and meanwhile you are standing guard, and remember I trust you." He was nearly sober now and penitent, although he did not know it, or admit it. Of course, his feelings were freely expressed. It is not strange to see the big tears come into a man's eyes in his state, but he meant it when he said, "You can count on me. I am going to help him through. I won't call on you unless he is going to 'kick the bucket.' I could not stand that alone." The poor old fellow died, but that sympathetic effort and response saved poor Jim and he has stuck it out ever since. He is doing the same thing with other men now. What he needed was an inspiration to do something for somebody else, and that was the one inspiration which the Spirit of God used to bring him again to the feet of Jesus Christ in penitence. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him;" but that verse means as well that He is

Doing for others

to *save them completely*. The Work of God and work for others go hand in hand.

Some men are indifferent to the Church because of their loyalty to surroundings and present companionships. That environment and those companions may be slowly dragging a man down, but he feels that it would be disloyal or discourteous to separate himself from them. He might be called a "prig" or a "hypocrite." They might think he considered himself better than they. It is not so much that that man is indifferent to the Church as it is that he is afraid of ridicule or misunderstanding. It is wise to get this man gradually into different surroundings, or at least to win his confidence sufficiently to talk to him plainly as to the foolishness of his position. Of what real use is he to those men or they to him? What might he be able to do for them if he had a genuine faith in God and the strong Christian impulse. But if you cannot go so far with him as this, gain for him new friends among those who are strong in character and faith, and let the personality of a new friendship overcome the lowering influence of the old until he is sensible enough to assert himself.

Three things in conclusion we would emphasise. Study your man. Study the Word

of God, that you may deal with him aright, and then work for him. This means knowledge, prayer, effort, and these three will break the walls of the indifferent. I would emphasise especially the place of the second—prayer—in dealing with these men. The praying man, if he is thoughtful and energetic, is the effective man.

Recently two young men were mentioned as men of character and force. One of them cared nothing for the Church. He would not attend the church, hence that avenue of approach seemed closed. He could not be approached personally. One or two attempts had failed. These men were constantly remembered before God. Months passed with no apparent result. One morning, after church, a man came up and was introduced to me, and his name happened to be that of one of the men for whom I was praying. Asking his full name, I was inwardly delighted to know that he was one of my men. I expressed my pleasure at meeting him, saying I had heard of him. He replied with equal cordiality, and stated that he had been interested in my sermons, and helped by them for the past three months. He left me with the remark, "To tell you the truth, I want to get busy along

this line." Through him the other man was reached.

But, men, I want to tell you that this expression strengthened my faith in prayer incalculably. Right here in our midst, out of the actual of to-day, now, God is using indifferent men and winning indifferent men to Him, not only by the organised efforts we are making, not only by our individual study of God's Word that we may adapt the truth, but in the power of prayer.

One evening recently, at the meeting of the Men's Club of a local church, 285 young men were present. When General F. D. Grant began to speak, instinctively those men drew their chairs up nearer about him. The meeting was intense in its informality. We were thrilled by the spirit of the evening, and the loyalty of patriotism of these men. One among them was moved to say, "Young men, we not only need what our speaker has brought to us, and that for which he stands, and for which his honoured father stood in our nation, but we need a loyalty to Jesus Christ and to His standards." Those men rose up and sung one verse of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" for General Grant, and followed with a verse of "Onward, Christian Soldiers," for Jesus

Christ. Their faces and voices spoke. We were thrilled to our very hearts as we saw and heard them. They sang with the loyal patriotism of young American manhood for our country, but they sang with equal enthusiasm for Jesus Christ.

There are scores of men who are ready to sing "Onward, Christian Soldiers," if we appeal to them with a manly message which comes from our hearts, and which is backed by consistent living. What the indifferent man wants is inspiration blended with sincerity, sympathy, and truth, and if we cannot give that message, the Lord Jesus Christ can give it through us if we are willing to be filled with His Spirit.

VIII
DOUBT AND DOUBTERS

"One single positive weighs more,
You know, than negatives a score."
—PRIOR.

"Go to thy birth-place, and if faith was there,
Repeat thy father's creed, thy mother's prayer."
—HOLMES.

"I do not seek to know in order that I may believe, but to believe in order that I may know."—AUGUSTINE.

"Doubt is the vestibule of faith."—COLTON.

"Doubt cramps energy. Belief is power."—F. W. ROBERTSON.

"Intellectually the difficulties of unbelief are as great as those of belief, while morally the argument is wholly on the side of belief."—DR. ARNOLD.

"Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."—*Mark 9: 24.*

"They could not enter in because of unbelief."—*Hebrews 3: 19.*

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye; but not to doubtful disputations."—*Romans 14: 1.*

VIII

DOUBT AND DOUBTERS

WHY be afraid of doubt and the doubter? Many of the most loyal supporters of the truth have come from this class. To doubt honestly is anything but a disgrace, for it shows not only thoughtfulness, but the blending of mind and conscience. The doubter becomes the believer, not when he fully understands, but when he trusts and loves. Saul of Tarsus, the unbeliever, became Paul the Apostle when he knew Whom he believed. He then could say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for *it is* the power of God unto salvation." The philosophy of faith is not half so important as the personality of faith. The why and wherefore of the Christian life becomes secondary when we have once learned to know the *Who* and learned to love Him who is the embodiment and incarnation of our belief. It took a great man like Augustine

Personality of faith

to write that marvellous sentence at the close of his career: "I do not seek to know in order that I may believe, but to believe in order that I may know."

But doubt, after all, is the expression of weakness rather than strength. Assurance wins victories where doubt does not admit or accept defeat. Henry Clay Trumbull has well begun his splendid book upon this subject with this sentence: "A man has more power through believing one thing than in disbelieving ten thousand things." He also adds: "No man is capable of disbelieving or doubting intelligently and sensibly unless he first has strong and positive belief." Doubt is inherent in many. It is as natural for some men to doubt as it is to breathe. They must be convinced, but when convinced, their faith is enthusiastic.

Instead of fearing doubt and running from it, we should approach it prayerfully and courageously. Instead of criticising it we should appreciate the opening it offers us for conversation and enlightenment. We do not refer to doubt for the sake of doubt, nor to that self-assertive bravado of speech which is the manifestation of superficiality and egotism. We are dealing with the subject in the genuine. Doubt is troubling

Approaching doubt

many a life. Doubt will lift like the fog when the sunlight shines through. It will lift from below and rise until hidden points stand out clearly in the morning light, but that sun must be the Sun of Righteousness, that Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world. Personified belief, incarnate truth, must answer the question of unbelief. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" There was but one answer; the Master used it: "*I am* the way, the truth, and the life."

Again He replied when misunderstood, "Ye search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me, and ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life." No substitution, even of God's Word, could make up for the personal Christ, Whom to approach and know was to believe. The old fable of the man meeting his brother in the fog is as true to life as it ever was, for doubt befogs the purest and divinest truth. But when that dubious, unrecognised object approaching comes nearer and nearer until you stand face to face, lo, he is not a prodigy, but a brother beloved.

Disregard and narrow criticism of doubt and the doubter are neither fair nor sensible.

It is so easy to dismiss this class from our thought with an impatient or irritable criticism, but this is as unwise as it is senseless. What splendid men to-day doubt from necessity rather than choice? How reasonable they are, and how frequently we find them eager to overcome this condition! Kindly and fair leadership, with patience, will clear their vision, and win their confidence. The open Word of God, backed by a consistent character and a clear brain, will transform conditions. Courteous and discreet approach finds ready response. The Master's voice was filled with love when Thomas could not believe, but when, at last, that voice was heard again, and bid him reach hither his finger, that loyal soul had not only lost his doubt, but gained his life and inspiration as he replied: "My Lord, and my God."

There are two classes—the honest and the dishonest doubter. There is little hope in dealing with the doubter who is dishonest. Usually he is seeking to cover up his sin on the basis of his doubt. As we previously stated, the man who is attempting to make his poor brain bear the responsibility of his indulgent body, is the man who is naturally insincere. True, he may be

Dishonest doubt

self-deceived, but where this sad condition exists, until the Holy Spirit leads him to penitence for and confession of the sin that lies back of his apparent doubt, there is little hope.

There are doubters who, in one sense, belong to neither class, or, rather, they are a combination of both. They are not altogether dishonest or altogether honest. They belong to life's exaggerators. They exaggerate their feelings, their thoughts, their condition, and the conditions of others. Exaggeration is sin, but the exaggerator scarcely knows he sins, for he is unconscious of his exaggeration and usually defends it or resents reproof. The superficial doubter frequently belongs to this class. To help him is to hold him down to facts, but in a wise way and with a kindly spirit. He gradually will realise that he is not a doubter after all,—at least, that many things which he has supposed were perplexing, are clear. It is not best to get into a controversy with him unless upon a matter of principle. There are times when we must talk plainly, but when such a course is necessary it should always be with the individual alone. Never talk personally with a man, or, at least, touch upon personal characteristics or problems, in the presence of an-

Exaggeration

other. Wait for a more opportune time. Let such conversation not only be plain, but direct and fearless, but never in a belligerent or critical spirit. You may win a dishonest doubter to the Lord Jesus Christ if he is dishonest through error, and not through motive. Don't let him fool you or think that he fools you. If his doubt is superficial, show him his limited vision by giving him a broader view. In other words, lead him to the heights, that his own eyes may gain the expanding view without suggestion. Show him himself. God's truth is a mirror; hold that mirror before him. A mirror does not reflect other than the scene which is before it.

We are sometimes deceived in men. Those whom we think are honest are dishonest, and the reverse is true. I have believed in men implicitly, and been blessed as they have joined me in audible, quiet prayer, only to discover later it was all a means to an end.

The dishonest doubter, after all, is secondary. Until God changes his heart we cannot help him. Our main work is with the man of honest convictions, or lack of them.

First let us study our man, find out his point of view, get him to talking. Learn his story, put yourself in his place. You know the old

controversy—one man said the fence was black, and his companion affirmed it was white. They almost came to blows, but the real facts were that both were right,—one side of the fence was white-washed, the other was weatherbeaten and black. They had viewed it from different sides, and both were correct. Quiet investigation would have cleared the whole matter, or, if either had waited to learn where the other stood there would have been no trouble. Let us find out where the other man stands, and, if necessary, let us take time to go with him to his point of vision. Too many times we argue from the traditions of life with which we are familiar, and forget that there are other traditions. The Eton youth is foolish to discuss a school tradition with a youth from Rugby. True enough, they are both lads of England, but the great schools of England have their various traditions and customs. You cannot convince a Yale man that crimson is a better color than blue, but you can convince a Yale man that a Harvard man would not be a Harvard man unless he preferred crimson. The day has passed when a Baptist ridicules a Congregationalist because he does not believe in Immersion. But the day

Honest doubt

has also passed when the Congregationalist does not concede that the Baptist has a right to his view and to his interpretation. Helpful discussion accepts differing premises, but it distinguishes between essentials and non-essentials. We ought, then, to discover where a man's difficulty lies—what does he doubt? Interpretations as well as standards have changed. Questions have arisen which were not questions a generation ago. Not only cause and effect, but sources and authorities, are challenged. This is not only true as to theology, but we have to face it as to the very Word of God.

How are we to deal with the men who do not accept the authority of Scripture? Those who are not loyal to the doctrines and dogmas of the past? What is the first thing to do? Doctrinal or theological discussion, after all, is not a very popular difficulty, but the question as to the authority of God's Word is. How are we to deal with it? A man opens a discussion as to the authenticity and authority of the Bible. How are you to answer him back? Do not answer him, but be familiar enough with God's Word to turn to the very passage and let the Word of God answer for itself. Frequently the discussion will take an

entirely different form, and accuracy will take the place of inaccuracy, and this very enlightenment as to what the Bible really says will clear the whole question. To cite a personal illustration: In a former parish, an old college acquaintance, contrary to his usual custom, attended the Sunday night service. He seemed interested, and was extremely attentive. As he was a man of force and influence, I sought an interview. He was an honest unbeliever. Upon asking him what he thought of the service, he replied with a smile, "The service was all right, but what you said was all nonsense from my point of view." Well, we both smiled. I replied that I expected him to say just about that same thing. We were not fencing, but sincere, and both of us believed in one another. My answer surprised him: "That is exactly what the Bible says a man in your position is going to think," I said. Then, when he asked me to explain, I turned to the first chapter of First Corinthians, and, placing upon his desk the very verses, read to him as he followed: "Preaching of the Cross is foolishness unto them that are perishing, but unto them that are saved it is the power of God." He knew that I was not seeking to classify him, but simply to show that his criti-

cism was not unexpected. From this our conversation extended and was continued later. It resulted in his beginning to study the Bible. He had been a student of literature, but, aside from a few truths of the Bible and stories of the Old Testament, learned in childhood, the Bible had been a closed book for twenty years. He was a student not only in his profession, but of literature. The study of God's Word brought him into a clear definition of faith, which was sufficient to change his attitude to life and identify him with the Christian Church and Christian activity. He could have annihilated any argument I could have brought to him, but the Scripture accomplished what it accomplished with Philip, for "beginning at that scripture he preached unto him Jesus."

Another instance relates to the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. A friend, who was also a student, spoke lightly of mankind in general and of the typical wickedness represented in many of the godly characters of the Old Testament. Asking him if he was willing to read a chapter in the New, we read that wonderful chapter on "Love." "Love suffereth long and is kind, love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is

not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; love never faileth." How about this chapter and the inadequacy of Scripture to help us believe in mankind? There was no need for an argument. He grasped my hand and added: "That is the most worth while thing I have read for years."

But there are men who cannot be approached or influenced by this means. We must first, then, find out what they do believe. Commit them to something in the way of belief. With such men it is not unwise to talk on the other side for a time. A man will frequently defend that which he has criticised if he is sufficiently off his guard to be perfectly frank and to be loyal to his real self. If you know your man, it is just as well to start just where he would start naturally, and take his side of the argument. He might take yours, for every thoughtful man has a natural disposition to argue, and arguing means opposite view. This very action on his part without comment of yours may result in a changed view. A great many men belong to this very class. We have belonged to it in earlier days ourselves.

Again we come into contact with a great

many who are influenced by much of the superficial Biblical criticism of to-day. Usually when you find a man who says the Bible is full of discrepancies it is well to get the best book on the subject you can find, and read it or send him a copy. It is not best simply to rely upon a proof-text, but answer the man's specific difficulty. In nine cases out of ten the matter will be easily cleared up. Where it is not, the man has at least grown to respect your careful interest in his problem. Frequently his difficulty is the result of second-hand thought, —the editorial which he read, the chapter which confused him, the sentence which misled, is another man's interpretation, and he himself has not thought the matter through, nor given much attention; but, like a comet, it attracted far more attention than the fixed stars or planets. It is well to put into the hands of such men some of the splendid books of constructive Biblical criticism, the books which command confidence, elevate the intellect, and honour highest scholarship. Many such books are popularly written to-day. But, better still, is a sufficient knowledge of the Word of God, to give spiritual nourishment by means of first-hand food instead of that which is pre-digested.

Another smaller class of doubters may be represented by those who are studying the difficulties of the Bible and reading the "mistakes of Moses," who have begun to feel that everything in history and prophecy is symbolic and metaphorical. They have lost all devotion to literalism. What are we going to do with the non-literalist? We certainly do not want to antagonise and lose him at once by affirming that his position is dangerous, misleading, and inaccurate. We surely have very much in which to agree if he is willing to study and read for himself. The great principles underlying the historical and prophetical books are common principles. The life of Jonah is certainly a revelation of a man's duty to obey God without hesitation and excuse. We have an opportunity to talk to this man as to these great characters of God's Word, because he is studying them. Omit some of the answers you would like to make to his alleged discrepancies and supposed errors. Get inside the outer shell of the thing. The rarest crystals are the stalactites and stalagmites of life. But these are found inside the cave, and the entrance to that cave means a journey, and the mysteries of darkness are the mysteries of the windings of the cavern; but

Literalism

they are worth the venture, and will call forth the admiration of the one who has followed you into this hidden recess.

One night a medical student sat down in the study. He had been reading somebody's volume on the "Mistakes of the Old Testament Narratives" as to a splendid old character. After talking a few moments we turned to our open Bibles with the question, "Let us get down to the real mission of this book and its life." Why did God put this in here? Why did he select this man? The other men of his time are almost unnoticed. God called him to do hard things. To face enemies right and left. He was not a coward, he was a hero, but he was human, and at times wicked, but he had a work and a message.

He performed that work, he delivered that message. He inspired his family and his nation to righteous living. We gained a vision of that man's life and soul that night, and the criticisms and discrepancies were scattered to the four winds. When he went out there was not a word. In fact, he had really forgotten the discussion which brought us together, and he became one of the strongest Sunday-school teachers in the city where he lives, a faithful student and expounder of the Scriptures.

We may believe the Bible from cover to cover, but let us be able to work with the men and guide the men who have not our belief or interpretation. The trouble is, when a man gets to studying what he does not believe in the Bible he is tempted to read every book man has manufactured, instead of reading the Bible itself!

Some of us have to deal occasionally with an entirely different class of doubters—those who have no faith in their own day. Men who do not believe in their own time and day. They doubt the hand of Providence in it all. They point to the white slave traffic and the saloon power and say, "What's the use?" "God in His world? No! God working to-day? No!" This man is a dangerous doubter, and he sometimes lives under the very shadow of the Church, and is even termed a "pious" man by some who know him. His pessimism assumes a sort of a holy tone, and he uses a prophetic holy voice. He, too, needs the Word of God as well as a physician's prescription. You and I cannot prescribe, but we can, with cheerful, sympathetic tact, open the Bible with him and help him. We can open the Word of God just where He would have us, and find Jesus Christ

The sanctimonious

weeping over Jerusalem, and from that scene we can lead to another in which the Master took the time to deal with and pray for individuals. This Man of Sorrows was a man who dined with Zaccheus, who sat down with the godless, who talked with the harlots, who did not allow the awful contagion of sin and the discouraging license of a wicked government to disqualify Him for personal service. This Saviour found a joy in seeking the lost and in saving them. Before we leave these very doubters we can pray with them, and we will invariably find that the bended knee is the great disarmer of doubt, and we will rise to united service to the Common Lord.

But the great contest of the Church, after all, has been upon the question of the supernatural. This is uppermost in the minds of vast multitudes to-day. The question varies. A few years ago it was the Resurrection, then the Miracles, then the Immaculate Conception, now it seems to be the Miracles again, and all the time it is an endless wheel—the human mind combating the supernatural, whether in Scripture or in life. But what would life be without the supernatural? We see it all about us. The realities of scientific discovery would have met with almost hysterical ridicule a few

years ago. Ships that pass in the night miles away bearing messages one to another without words or sound! Transportation entirely changed on our avenues and streets by the mere rapid explosions of gasoline! Airships following their own courses and working on schedule! Then touch the realm of disease and its cure. The operation which fifty years ago was a miracle is to-day almost commonplace. Certain fatal diseases are no longer considered such if properly diagnosed and treated. Far greater the meaning of the supernatural in the spiritual realm. Read the fourth chapter of the First Book of Corinthians, where Paul says, "We are the stewards of the mysteries of God." The Christian ceases to be a Christian when he simply believes what he can understand, and passes that on to others. He is "a steward of mystery." Faith is not a matter of sight, but of the unseen. Quote the first verse of the 11th chapter of Hebrews, as we read it in the Revision: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." If a man doubts the supernatural, do not argue with him, but read the 11th chapter of Hebrews through with him, and take the time to do it. Of course, the belief in the supernatural is pri-

mary. Augustine made it such. He did not believe, but his mother did. All through those years she followed him from city to city, even when she knew he was living a wrong life. The preaching of a great soul who believed in the supernatural aroused his intellect and touched his conscience. A great doubter in that which he could not understand became the author of a great book like "The Confessions," and scores of other volumes. He became a steward of the mysteries of God. The great doubters of this world have become the great champions for Jesus Christ. Let us bring the men who doubt to the Cross. Let us neither antagonise nor argue, but work out the problem as we sit together at His feet. Let us use patience (see I Thess. 1:3), wisdom (James 1:5), sympathy (Hebrews 12:1-3), and, more than all, let us pray with and for them. Pray in the power of that mighty prayer of Paul's (Ephesians 3:14-21), "For this cause I bow my knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." And in the power of those words he wrote to the Philippian Church (Philippians 4:6), "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." And let us crown our faith with the 13th verse of that same chapter,

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," knowing that "God will supply all our need according to His riches in glory" (verse 19).

And the doubter will be won. This power of spiritual victory is born of a living faith, and we can win men who disbelieve because we believe, because we believe God believes in them, and because we, too, believe in them.

IX
REGAINING MEN

"What's gone and what's past help should be past grief."—SHAKESPEARE.

"This is the place, stand still, my steed,
Let me review the scene,
And summon from the shadowy past
The forms that once have been."
—LONGFELLOW.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one."—*Galatians 6: 1.*

"Honour thy father and thy mother."—*Exodus 20: 12.*

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more."
—BISHOP DOANE.

IX

REGAINING MEN

WE now take up the important subject of reaching the men who are already Christ's, but are inactive or unrecognised. We aim to reach the unconverted. Stop a moment and consider the immense amount of waste material that there is in the Church of God. Important business interests have developed out of saving the waste! Utilising the useless. The very word "by-product" has become an important word to-day. There are thousands of men who have become successful because they have appreciated the value of by-products. That verse in the New Testament, "Lest I myself become a castaway," does not refer to a lost soul! But the castaway in the sense of useless! To illustrate: This is a jack-knife: suppose it is lost and left out in the rain for two years! You could take the rusted blade and snap it with a finger, but you

Reaching those already reached

could not turn it back into iron ore! It is still a jack-knife, but it is useless. It is a castaway. Many a Christian that has become a castaway still belongs to Christ. Many of those who are castaways and useless have become so because they have not been active for the Lord Jesus Christ. They have at one time taken a stand in His Church, but they have fallen out. Now we will not attempt the means, the method, the philosophy, the psychology of this condition, but we will consider the practical side of the remedy.

These men are, or, rather, may be a great influence for Christ if reclaimed. These very men we usually do not consider when we talk of the men to be won to the Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose a man is apparently lost, so far as service is concerned. Why give him up? Why not work for him? He certainly has much in his life that will respond quickly if Jesus Christ is genuinely presented. That man has a sympathetic response in his life,—there is a chord there that will vibrate if touched by Christ. We must realise that these men must be reclaimed.

They are everywhere. They are in every part of the city by the thousand. You can go through any street of the city where people

live and find case after case where unplaced church letters lie in drawers or desks, letters never placed in a local church.

There are thousands of others who have never sent for their letters, many of whose names are upon some distant church roll, their present addresses probably unknown. Those people need to be found, and encouraged into active church service. Tens of thousands of such members drift into oblivion every year. They are the waste forces for Christ outside the Church. Many of them are earnest Christians, who feel the loss of spiritual fellowship.

Church letters

In a single week one of our pastors came in contact with three different families whose letters were not placed in any church, and had not been for years. All happened to be prominent leaders in the churches from which they came. One a former Sunday-school superintendent in a school of over four hundred. For two years he had not been inside of a Sunday school in Chicago, and had only attended church six or seven times. All he awaited was a knowledge of need and a cordial invitation. This brought him to a realisation that he was not doing his duty. A second was a teacher of

Old workers

thirteen girls, and eleven of those thirteen girls had confessed the Lord Jesus Christ under her leadership. Still, for months she had been without a church home. The third had been a substitute teacher in her church at home. One of them said: "Do not tell people I have been active, for I am ashamed that I have not been more alive here." Now, some of these very people have been leaders, but have gotten into new conditions, strange surroundings, in a city with far larger problems than they had ever known, and before they knew it they had drifted away or lost touch with active work.

Then many are circumstanced this way: Here is a girl who was married and immediately came to the city. Her husband was of another denomination, and they did not agree or settle upon a church home. They wander from church to church, and, after four or five months of this, they become what we call "sermon tasters," or, more probably, "music tasters." After going along a time in this way, they naturally become indifferent. Then, perhaps, God sends His best gift into that little home, and the mother does not want her husband to be away in the evening. Perhaps they do not get up early enough

The young family

on Sunday morning. They do not go to church, they have gotten out of the habit.

There is never a time in a man or woman's life when there is a chance to mould the home for God as when that house is changed into a home by the coming of a little child. The father, if he is approached the right way, will respond, and that home may become a home of God. That is why the Cradle Roll is doing such a work in our Sunday schools. Other children come into the home and cares multiply. Then the time comes when they begin to think. When the children ask: "Father, mother, why don't you go to church? Katherine goes to Sunday school; Donald's minister came to see his mother the other day. I do not see why some minister does not call on us. I do not see why we do not go to church."

There is another class. A number of good people have lost sympathy with the church. What is the trouble? Often some trivial experience. They went into a church in a new locality, and when shown to a pew the people who rented the pew came in unexpectedly, and were neither cordial in look nor word. That was enough. They felt uncomfortable throughout the service, and were not helped. In fact, listened to little in sermon

Past prejudice

or Scripture. "I will never darken the doors of the church again," was his remark, and his action. Well, that is a most foolish, careless, superficial, and un-Christlike thing to say, but he was hurt, and he was not big enough to overlook the other man's littleness. After one has spoken this way, he seems to think it cowardly or disloyal to forget it or change his mind. But the sad part of it all is that their children are growing up without God, and all because their parents became indifferent through this incident.

Some of these very people can be reached easily if their confidence is patiently won. A little attention and sympathy will overcome the prejudice of years. They won't tell you at first why they do not attend church, but after a while you awaken within them the latent longing, and when you invite them into your pew, and perhaps even call for them Sunday morning, they come back, and you not only save them and their children, but their children's children after them.

Others have received unfair treatment from members of the church. Here is a man who kept a small corner grocery store, and had to make a living through very small amounts. He only made one-fifth

Thoughtlessness

of a cent a pound on some staple goods, and had to sell a great deal to clear anything. He had children to put through school, and he tried to do it honestly. Some one,—an officer in the church, possibly, kept him waiting two months for his money, and was apparently angry when he sent his bill.

Another is a poor dressmaker, and some woman in the church who owed her a bill left on her summer outing without paying for the dresses she had worked late into the evening to finish. She had worked faithfully. Her friend had come to her and said to her: "You must get that dress done in time," and she had done her best. But the weeks went by, and the bill had not been paid, and, needing the money, she walked over to see her about it, only to find the house, that splendid, great house, closed, the door and windows boarded. That meant "no vacation" for her. And she is forced back to her long summer of sewing. Is it strange she says to herself: "Yes, she's a member of the Missionary Society! I do not think I'll go there to church."

Sometimes those who have the most money are not the most thoughtful of those who have the least, and are the most faithful. There are people all through the very communities in

which all of us live who have suffered just such experiences, and they love the Lord Jesus Christ, but have been kept from confessing Him by thoughtless inconsistency in others' lives. It is our business to win them back into the church, and to their own proper place there.

And then that other woman, the one who was thoughtless and went away forgetting the one whose bill was not paid, she no doubt would weep to-day if she knew the circumstances.

I once gave such an illustration from actual life in a sermon, and noticed that a woman in the back of the church whom I did not know was very much affected.

A strange coincidence followed. A humble member of the church within a few weeks showed me a letter from a total stranger. The woman that wrote the letter never dreamed that it would come to my eyes. I read: "Our pastor last Sunday morning said something that opened my eyes to a condition I had never known. I have always paid my bills at the dry-goods stores every six months. It is customary. They only send bills then. I never thought of paying them any other way. I never dreamed that every one did not have the same credit, that my poor dressmaker did not

have a chance," and then she went on to say: "I am enclosing a small gift with this check, and I hope it will add some comfort and joy to you this summer, and if my carelessness has ever robbed you of rest or change in your life, it will tell you my regret and give me now the pleasure of sharing in some coming joy." I saw that letter. There are a lot of people whom you and I condemn in wholesale fashion who only are thoughtless.

The mystery of sorrow

Again there are those who have suffered the great mysteries of sorrow, not being able to understand them. They have never had a sympathetic heart help them out of their distress. Men, this class seems to increase more and more. In a village toward the South land there was an aged Episcopal rector. They told me that there was not a man in the whole county who had the influence he had. The Roman Catholics would stop and bow to him on the street, and say "Good-morning, Father." The Protestants universally looked to him as the very Bishop of the whole community, and every other minister loved him. "How do you account for it?" the stranger asked, only to learn his story. His wife and five children, within eighteen months, one after another, the Lord had taken away. Through

it all, every Sunday, he was in his place. His prayer, his sermon, revealed a great heart sustained by God. There was not a man, woman, or child in sorrow or distress, if he knew it, to whom he did not quietly find his way. He would go into that home, where a father was suffering, where a mother was dying, where a brother or sister longed for sympathy, and with a single word or look he would comfort and help. Everybody loved him, for, somehow, they knew he suffered with them, and had borne up with Christian fortitude in his own intense sorrow, deeper than any of them had known. He won all classes into loving sympathy with the Church of Christ Universal.

There are many who have been driven away from the Church and from Christ by these very mysteries of sorrow and the perplexing distresses of personal grief; but we may regain them if we will patiently serve.

Sometimes a disgrace is associated with estrangement. Sometimes the mind is not normal. There are all kinds of conditions, and men cannot understand, and their hearts cry out to God, "How long, how long!" They need human, intelligent sympathy, and some one to lead them to The Man of Sorrows.

Oh, how many people there are in this world who need help because they have been driven away by the worldly interpretation of a Divine revelation. They fail to see the colour blended in the rainbow, arching and uniting earth and heaven, because the sun shines through the storm.

There is another class of people who are subject to surroundings of evil temptations and bad companions. One Sunday night, at the evening service, I was speaking upon "Getting the Right Start." Among other things I said: "If any of you young men are in bad boarding-houses, get out of them. If you are surrounded by influences where you cannot serve Christ, get away from those influences." Three different young men have spoken of these words since,—two by letter and one in person. One said: "You drove in that nail right to the head. The trouble is, I did not want to get out of my surroundings, but I have gotten out, and I feel more a man." The other two men wrote that the single sentence as to changing boarding-houses had solved for them the problem.

Evil companions

This has taught me a lesson. Right among us are thousands of men who are surrounded by those who are keeping them away from Christ,

and they need the companionship of some one who will bring them to Christ.

Take the college problem. Our Yonug Men's Christian Associations in the colleges, realising the work they can do, begin work early with the men. They cannot begin too soon to tie up good companions to the freshmen. To associate them with the right kind of men at the very beginning of the course, during the first weeks. The first four weeks in college has more to do with the future of many students than all the rest of the time put together. This is especially true where men are rushed and pledged at once to the fraternities.

The college problem

Are we careful enough to see who chums with that boy? Why not plan the campaign?

Again, it is true that thousands of young men are coming to the city month after month into new surroundings. Many of them have come from Christian influences, but they will soon drift into sin unless associated with true companions. They have been identified with the Church of God in the old home, where religion and the services of the church had been the habit of their lives, but they find themselves suddenly in a whirlwind of activity, rushing on without a thought of God or His Church. A

few months, sometimes a few weeks, and they are lost amid the throng. They must be sought out, regained, and associated with those who are alive for Jesus Christ.

The sons and daughters of the Church

We have no right to overlook another large class who are the rightful and choice inheritance of the Christian Church. We refer to the sons and daughters, the grandsons and the granddaughters, of those who a generation ago were the reliable and honoured leaders and constituents of the Church. The downtown church has a smaller proportion of these to-day than the rapidly growing prosperous suburban church. The very transfer of home and property has had much to do with this. The old residences are now down town. Some of them have been sold for boarding-houses, rooming-houses, or have been reconstructed into small apartment houses, or torn down and replaced for business or manufacturing purposes. With the old homestead many of the old traditions and customs have gone. The new surroundings have been fascinating and controlling. Many have gone from the old home to the college or university, to return after four or seven years in academic study, perhaps a longer time spent in travel. During those years changes

have come, friendships have scattered, associations been broken. Soon individual homes have been started, the young people have gone with the current. The attractive plans which the young architect has drawn up appeal to all that is artistic and homelike. There is a bit of landscape gardening thrown in on a small scale. It is only thirty-five minutes from down town. Transportation facilities are excellent.

Or, they have gone out into the new apartments. A great choice of selection is theirs. Hundreds of these splendid buildings have gone up rapidly. The servant question will not trouble them. The problem of dirt and dust is reduced, and two or three college chums are going to be only a building or two away.

The suburban church

The young church in the community is struggling, although assured of a splendid future. It is not considered the thing to go to church out here as it used to be. Upon accepting the invitation of a friend for a Sunday morning service they met conditions different from any they had ever experienced. The choir could not touch the splendid quartet of the old home church. Perhaps they failed to realise that their standard of judgment as to music was far in advance

over that of the pre-college days. The minister may have been judged by a similar unjust standard. The fact of it is they are out of sympathy with church-going. It is no longer an accepted condition of duty. It is no longer a habit.

We cannot deny that such illustrations may be multiplied by the hundred everywhere. Neither can we deny that there are among these people the descendants of the very best leaders the Church of God has ever known. We contend that these people are worth working for. They deserve our patient, persistent effort. Their parents and grandparents deserve it. Many of our older churches were built by the self-denial of the forebears of these very people. If once won, they will soon find their place of responsibility and leadership. They have the very blood of the Church in their veins. What if they do speak lightly of sacred matters? It is not intentional irreverence. It is the natural expression of their thoughtlessness. When the serious side of it all appeals to them, they will be the most dependable men and women the Church possesses, for they have behind them the heritage of countless unanswered prayers, and a covenant-keeping God. You may not be able

A discrimination

to attend quite so many public meetings or conventions if you go in to win them. It will mean many an evening spent in a home in quiet conversation and friendliness, instead of public recognition and applause, but it will pay. It is needed to-day fully as much as the rescue work in the great mission among the outcasts. True, it has not the same fascination nor recognition. It is far easier to pray kneeling at a wooden bench than kneeling on a Persian rug. It is easier to put your hand of sympathy on the shoulder of a forlorn "down-and-out," than it is to touch the heart of a successful young merchant or professional man. But the Saviour who sought the woman of Samaria, sought Zaccheus and dined in his home. The Saviour who told the story of the prodigal son appealed to the rich young ruler and reasoned with him, and it is our duty as Christian men to enlist in the ranks of the Church the sons and daughters of God's honoured soldiers and warriors of the past.

There are Sons and Daughters of His Revelation, as well as Sons and Daughters of our Revolution.

X
FOLLOWING UP THE WORK

"When Jesus knew that His hour was come,—having loved His own,—He loved them unto the end."—*John 13: 1.*

"It is finished."—JESUS CHRIST.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."—*Revelation 21: 7.*

"Be thou faithful unto death."—*Revelation 2: 10*

"Every noble work is at first impossible."—CARLYLE.

"If knowledge is power, patience is powerful."—ROBERT HALL.

"There is no well-doing, no God-like doing, that is not patient doing."—DR. HOLLAND.

X

FOLLOWING UP THE WORK

IT is one thing to win men to Christ, and another, we are told, to win them for service. But, is it another thing? Or, at least, should it be? Saul of Tarsus said: "Who art thou, Lord?" That was his first question. His second had to do with activity. "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" When a man believes in Jesus Christ and accepts Him as his Master, he is not interested in the mere philosophy of religion, but he is interested immediately in a philosophy of service. The greatest work of the Church of Christ is the extension of His Kingdom. But extensive work begins with intensive affection. And intensive affection invariably leads to extensive activity. The work of the Church is to place those who have come into her membership in permanent service.

Salvation and service

We have already dealt with the man who has discontinued or strayed, or lost his ardour. We are now considering the man who has come

into the Church. How can he be held and developed?

What is joining the Church, is it a means or an end? "A means," you reply. Yes, but a lot of us seem to think it is an end. As a woman once said to me: "Now that my boy has joined the Church, he will surely be safe for life." When I replied, "Don't you believe it; he has only started," she seemed surprised, and wanted me to explain.

Joining the Church

Uniting with a church is a means to an end. When a man comes into the Church he has only started. His work has only begun, and it is the business of all of us who are in the Church to see that he is kept by the power of God and trained to become an efficient workman. Still, many come into the Church and stop there, thinking it is the final instead of the initial step. As if a man received his diploma as soon as he matriculated at college! His very matriculation implies a long and steady course of study. And that course of study in itself is simply a means to an end, for it is to fit him for his life work.

Who would think of putting lambs out to pasture, and then leaving them unguarded and alone, upon the ground that they were safe

enough simply because they were within the enclosure, and had passed through the entrance bars. Confessing Christ is only the beginning, the passing through the gateway. Every night the faithful Shepherd folds those lambs, and all through the weeks and years there must be the Christian training in and out of the church. Food and work which must mean growth and development.

The statistical reports of our churches naturally influence us to lay much stress upon the importance of large additions to membership, but there are no statistical incentives to follow this work up. Here we are liable to fail. An increased membership without corresponding spiritual and practical growth represents dead wood instead of living timber.

Church statistics

In Brown Memorial Church in Baltimore for many years we had a printed list of all the varied activities of the local church, the denomination, the church at large, city philanthropies, settlements, Christian associations, charity organisations. All who came into the church were asked to check up the work they were willing to undertake, and were immediately referred to the one having that particular work in charge. Some

Every one at work

worked in the Sunday school, some in the missionary societies, others in the hospitals, mission schools, training classes; in fact, all over the city. Many were friendly visitors under the city charity organisation. This work was carefully followed up by an efficient leader in each particular field. So varied are the opportunities offered in a large city that individual temperaments and abilities may each exercise the largest possible personal influence. Thus a missionary in Central India, or a local newsboy on the street, may be the recipient of active church assistance. Such work is contagious. The man or woman who is not busy about something which counts becomes the exception, and the inclination, as well as reputation of a church seems to call for individual coöperation.

Such work, however, must always be tempered with wisdom and sanity, as well as eagerness to engage all in activity, for we must never disregard the far greater need of faithful and patient work within the home circle. Phillips Brooks wisely cautioned us to remember the importance of caring for our appointed work first; for the work of a mother in the home, or a clerk in the store, or bank, is just as much a part of Christian service as the external which commands more marked attention.

This should not deter us, however, from realising that our work as Christian leaders is not finished when we get people into the Church. The mere public confession of Christ is not enough. We must tie them up to wise activity.

Criticisms have arisen very generally as to the multiplicity of Church organisations. Many affirm that an over-emphasis has been given to organisation. Some churches, we hear, are alive externally, but dead at the heart. There is reason for this. The Church is cold and useless if it is calling attention to machinery and organisation rather than to life and human need. The business which is successful permanently is not a mere matter of personal advertisement. Superior production is self-advertising. Where raw material is being transformed into superlative finished product, the public are asking questions, and the axiom holds good—that "deeds speak louder than words." Those who are doing the most real work in the world are those who have the least time to talk about it. The church well organised and systematically governed and regulated is usually the useful church in the community, but there is no need of advertising

Organisations

Machinery

the organisation and system, for such publicity attracts men to the material rather than to the spiritual side. It tends to distract from the real mission of Christianity, and creates self-satisfaction, pride, and egotism. The best possible organisation is that which is not seen. The gestures of the truly eloquent are not noticed. The machinery of a spiritual church is driven by an Unseen Power. The world sees the product and believes, but the machinery is behind closed doors, and scarcely the hum of the wheels heard without.

A large church which had received members by the hundred recently found upon examination that almost half of those who had united within the past five years were unknown to any member of the session, and the pastor himself could give no information whatever as to a large number. This led to two things: A committee of visitation was appointed, which found that many of these new members had dropped out of the church life, ceasing even to attend services within a few months from the time they united. The general impression had gone out throughout the community that the pastor was simply interested in urging strangers to join the church. Homes which he had entered repeatedly with this in view had not been en-

tered for years after they had been admitted. Frequently those who had united with the church were addressed by him and members of his session, as well as by prominent members of his church, as if they were total strangers, and in some instances had been urged to unite with the church of which they were already members. It also led to a revolution in the working policy of pastor, session, and people. Instead of continuing in this extensive solicitation, they began to work among their own members and to become better acquainted. Receptions were held for those who had come into the church recently. Systematic calling was done by older members upon more recent communicants. Although the church continued to grow numerically, a very different spirit quickly prevailed. The Sunday school began to increase, as well as the prayer meeting; although fewer came into the church, the congregations became much larger. The offerings increased, and the general influence of the church was manifestly felt.

A working church without doubt is a winsome force in a community, but it is just as much the duty of the church to work with its own as to work outside its own. We live in an age of team work. The church that suc-

ceeds with superlative results is the church which trains every member to become a workman.

No football captain could hold his influence through a second game if he did not lead his men to work in a unit, and he would not be a successful captain if he did not discover the weak man in his team, and strengthen or remove him.

As leaders in the Church of Christ, we must use the same methods. In the very forefront of the work ourselves, we must train men to work with us. Those men will train others to work with them, and before we are aware of it, the Church will be a great working internal force, strengthening itself as it works with a unity of purpose and effort in gaining the ground of the enemy.

A rather discouraging condition not infrequently experienced to-day is that of a large membership of men with scarcely any who are fitted or willing to take responsible positions, especially to fill offices of spiritual trust. We know of churches where there are strong brotherhoods and men's associations in which it is almost impossible to find any strong characters to fill vacancies on the official boards of the church. Men have united and been mem-

bers for years and even decades, but they seem to be just about where they were years before.

The wisdom of giving proper attention to the boys and young men applies here. The bright lads who are growing so rapidly, whom we see in short trousers to-day, and long trousers to-morrow, are the ones we mean. With these boys lies the future of the Church. To hold them and train them is the priceless privilege of older men. Time spent with them in spiritual training will return a hundred fold. Realising the importance of work among a little older class, one of our city churches has this last winter attained definite and large results. Under the Men's Club about twenty young men met for lunch each week in one of the central down town hotels. They had a room to themselves. The lunch was provided by an interested member of the club. They met promptly at 12:30 for one hour. The pastor of the church always met with them as well as the president of the club. It was understood that any man who had a shorter time was at liberty to leave at will. This particular church was located in the centre of a neighbourhood of thousands of young men who filled the boarding- and rooming-houses for blocks about.

Utilising three or four of their number who

had more time than others, a thorough canvass of every house in each block was made. The work was done so systematically and followed up so accurately by means of special diagrams and card indexes, that everything was checked up week by week. Each week, from fifty to a hundred new names were wisely distributed among the various members of the committee, discriminating in appointing men of certain characteristics to call upon those with whom they would have the greatest natural influence. These cards were filled out and returned the following week, with such information as could be obtained upon the initial visit. All this was done without obtrusive publicity, and in a manly and straightforward spirit. Cases of loneliness, discouragement, and special need were wisely reported. Sickness and sorrow received immediate and sympathetic attention. Spiritual help was given in many cases when opportune. What has been the result? The Men's Club has grown to an active list of over seven hundred membership within eight months, coming into direct contact with over a thousand young men. Several of the public meetings of the club for men only have been attended by over three hundred men. The Sunday evening services, under the care of the

club, have been largely attended, with a proportion of more than two-thirds young men present. Conversions have resulted week after week through the personal work of this committee and other members. Over fifty of those who have united with the church during the year were directly reached through this agency.

Another feature has developed which is encouraging. The pastor has received letters from far-away New England farms, from the extreme West, from the South, and from nearby villages, from grateful parents and friends, enclosing in many instances letters from the young men themselves. Some of these letters would bring tears to the eyes of any one: "My boy has been in your city for five years. His father and I sometimes feared we had almost lost him, but every night he had his own place in our prayers. You perhaps may know something of the joy that came to our hearts when we received the enclosed letter. We can never thank the young men of your church for what they have done for him. His letter will show you how close he feels to the Men's Club in your church. And to think that he confessed Christ last Sunday morning. Our hearts are too happy to tell you how we feel, but may God bless you and the young men

who are working with you. We wish our boy in the Far West could be in your city, too." This letter is typical.

A phase of this work which has deepened its power will never be known in its far-reaching influence, for many of these very young men have been trained as never before for others, and prayer and personal work have gone hand in hand.

But it is not enough merely to lead men to confess Christ. We must follow the work up, that the Holy Spirit may prompt men to study, pray, and work for others. If, as men within the Church of Christ, we can bring about this condition, differences and littlenesses will disappear; glowing coals, close to one another, will grow brighter and brighter. White heat will radiate a warmth and glow whch will attract and bless, and the Church of Jesus Christ will become the fireside where son and stranger are always equally welcome; a place where magnetism of human sympathy blends with the power of the Son of God.

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